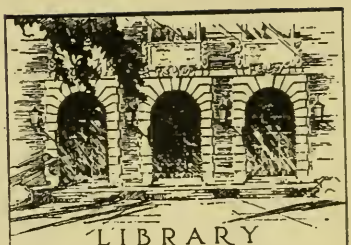

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TWO
OLD MEN'S TALES

THE DEFORMED

AND

THE ADMIRAL'S DAUGHTER

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

SECOND EDITION

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY CONDUIT STREET.
1834.

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THE

ADMIRAL'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a fine morning in April—Two gentlemen met suddenly in St. James's-street.

"Ha, Harry!"

"Laurence, my dear fellow!—is it you?—How long have you been in town?—Why did you not send to me?—Glad to see you once more, with all my heart!"

"I am come from Paris," said Laurence—"I was making my way to you—In Spring Gardens still, I suppose?—How are Mrs. Vivian and the children?"

"Perfectly well, I assure you, as I hope

you will acknowledge when you see them.—Ah, Laurence! you were but a sorry prophet—an ill-omened augur—I am the happiest fellow upon the face of the earth."

"I doubt it not, my good fellow. And why I ever should have doubted it, I am at a loss to conceive. I must have had strange fantastical notions, before I went abroad—but *vive Paris* for curing one of all nonsense. I am come back prepared to believe you not quite the very most miserable of men, because you have married the very most beautiful of women."

"Come and see for yourself. We dine at seven. I hope you conclude there is a cover for you as long as you stay in town: and may that be for ever. But don't wait till seven—Come now—and see Iñez and the children."

Mr. Hervey accompanied his friend home. They were shewn up stairs, the door opened, and before him he once more beheld, Miss Thornhaugh—Iñez—Mrs. Vivian.

She was sitting on a low footstool, with her

youngest child in her lap. The little creature had just stolen the golden comb from her mother's hair, and was holding it in triumph above her head; the raven locks of softest silk were rolling in a profusion of dark clouds over a face and neck pure as alabaster, and now rather thrown back, as those eyes, so exquisitely beautiful, were turned upwards, to the cherub hands of the child. No picture ever designed by the hand of any master, no imagination of any poet, could surpass the loveliness of the one presented. She rose hastily, as the gentlemen entered the room—on which the hair "in hyacinthine flow," literally swept her delicate feet. Gathering it hastily round her head, with her little child in her hand, she stepped forward to welcome her husband, and the stranger—Laurence!

Laurence was actually startled at her beauty when he first saw her. He seemed to have forgotten how very beautiful she was, or, perhaps, he had never *very* much admired her before;

but now his countenance, usually so indifferent, when regarding persons or things, became animated with surprise and pleasure.

As soon as she was aware who it was, her little confusion, at being thus surprised by a stranger, gave way to the most cordial affability. Her hand was stretched out with a "Mr. Hervey! I am unaffectedly glad to see you."

"Are you indeed?" said Laurence, all his former asperities rushing into his memory; "are you really so good?"

"Indeed I am. But now I recollect it *is* very good of me.—You did your best to quarrel with me, ages ago—and to put Harry out of humour with me too—But as I triumphed in spite of you—so I bear you no ill-will—You only enhanced the glory of my victory."

"That was well," replied he: "otherwise, to vanquish, with means like yours, would have been but a contemptible proof of skill."

"The same fellow still," said Vivian. "Al-

ways half unintelligible to me.—What the deuce can you mean by that?"

"Oh, he means a very pretty compliment," said Iñez. "I can't agree with Miss Vivian at all—I think Paris *has* improved Mr. Hervey vastly."

"I think London must have done the same by you; for I cannot recollect that Miss Thornhaugh——"

"Exactly the same. But you seem to have lost, it must be confessed—a little—a little touch of cynicism—and hate-all-not-just-according-to-my-own-model whims—Is it not so? But I beg your pardon.—As poor Harry is irretrievably lost, we need not renew old disputes.—You can no longer serve him by abusing me now—and as I shall not *fear*, perhaps I shall not hate, you. And now what do you say to Harry's little girl?"

Laurence did not like children, but this was a charming little creature. He took it in his arms, and kissed it heartily. Mrs. Vivian

looked pleased, Captain Vivian gratified, to see himself once more united to the man he loved; and to find him at last appear inclined to sympathise in his admiration of the almost faultless wife.

They sat down to chat, and were immediately as confidential and as much at ease as if they had parted but the day before.

Laurence talked of all he had seen, and was excessively agreeable. He, whom she had used to think dry and critical, was now so droll in his remarks, so acute in his observations, so brilliant in his descriptions, so caustic, yet so full of good-humour, that both his friends thought they saw him for the first time, and were quite delighted with him.—He appeared as much pleased with them.

They dined together without other company. It was one of those well-appointed little repasts, where a few elegantly arranged and exquisitely cooked dishes succeed one another in silent order: where nothing is superfluous, and no-

thing is wanting. Servants of respectable demeanour, well mannered and adroit, without puppyism or forwardness, bore evidence of the good sense which regulated the mansion. After dinner, the children appeared for one short half-hour, attended by a nurse, neither fine nor vulgar, but respectable, sensible, gentle—to take her glass of wine from her master, and courtesy round with grave precision. The little ones were, as they have been described, lovely children, simple, and unspoiled either by flattery or unseasonable reproof. They were neither shy nor obtrusive. Laurence was delighted; and the more so when he found the charming mistress of the scene altered in some points which he had wished amended.

At Middleton Court, to say a book was never seen, would be untrue—for the *shelves* of the library at least were full—but to see a book opened, or to hear a book even mentioned, was a rare occurrence; and Mr. Hervey's insatiable love of reading, so far from meeting with

sympathy, had excited against him something a little approaching to a prejudice.

Miss Thornhaugh had openly and undisguisedly expressed her most sincere abhorrence of every thing that could be called study, greatly to the annoyance of Laurence. He had always regretted that Captain Vivian was not, what could be called, a reading man. Harry was not ignorant; he had received a good education; and, possessing a remarkably quick perception, united to a fund of sound good sense, he had observed and learned much of the varied world in which he had lived; still, Laurence, like other men of deep and various reading, acutely felt, in conversing with Vivian, the want of a more diversified knowledge than mere personal observation will ever supply. Sensible of the vast advantages which intellectual cultivation now offers to a man—be his sphere of life what it may—he had lamented that the talents of the friend he loved should want the assistance of solicitous cultivation. He

had therefore, felt sorry that the young lady selected by Captain Vivian should be considerably deficient in these respects herself; and he was disposed to be angry when, far from being ashamed of such deficiency, she openly gloried in it, satirised the professors of science and the sons of literature, and ridiculed, without the slightest mercy, every pretension of the kind in those of her own sex.

But time had opened the eyes of Iñez upon this subject. Endowed with an excellent natural understanding, she, on her first entrance into general society, had discovered her own deficiency, and had not been slow in endeavouring to correct it. As a woman of the world, she wished to possess those acquirements which all around her possessed. As a mother, she wished to direct the minds of her children. She had abundance of time at her command, and, since her marriage, had devoted much both to reading and thinking. Her drawing-room table was littered with books; and her

powers of conversation had extended to a degree which at once surprised and delighted Laurence. And not only did she speak well herself, but she had become capable of fully appreciating his remarkable powers of thinking and speaking—and to be so appreciated by an intelligent and beautiful woman, is perhaps the climax of success to an intellectual man.

It would be hard to say which of the three friends was the best pleased with this happy day of reunion. The hours seemed to have wings—and, before they parted at two o'clock, for so long did the conversation, which seemed as if it could not find an end, continue, Laurence had promised to breakfast in Spring Gardens the next day—to dine, &c., &c., &c.

Mrs. Vivian was not found to be less lovely on the morrow. So sweetly gay and cheerful over her breakfast table!

After breakfast, Captain Vivian went out, as was his custom. Laurence remained sitting over

the drawing-room fire—a book in his hand, into which he never looked—his eyes engaged in watching the movements of Iñez — How first she played and frolicked with the children —how next she wrote and folded all her tiny notes and billets—how last she, too, came to the fire, buried herself in a crimson cushioned chair, and took her book.

" You are become quite studious since I went away," he began.

" Not much of that: but I was so egregiously ignorant, it really would not do—I have been forced to read Bingley's Animal Biography, that I may know a walrus from a cameleopard—and Mrs. Markham's History of England, to learn whether the Pretender or the Conqueror was beaten at Culloden."

" Laurence smiled, not as formerly, with a sort of contemptuous compassion—" And what book have you got now?"

" Oh, I am ashamed to tell you—you will think me so ridiculous—I know you of old,

Mr. Hervey"— putting down the book, and looking sweetly, yet archly in his face; "you will be as ready to accuse me of pretension, as you used to be of ignorant negligence. Indeed, I can scarcely myself believe what pleasure the attempt to cultivate my slender faculties has given me."

"Don't speak of old times—What a bear I was!"

"Not quite that—yet to call you amiable, would be rather flattering—However, you seem resolved to make amends now."

"I can never forgive my own stupid folly. Is it possible, Miss Thornhaugh...I mean Mrs. Vivian—that you can ever look upon me as any thing but the most conceited pragmatical puppy that ever walked the earth!"

"I shall always look upon you as Harry's oldest and dearest friend," said she warmly—"A recommendation sufficient for me, if you were that rugged bear or hyrcane tiger you describe yourself—I am not, as I told you, afraid of you now—I am past that."

"Indeed you may say so—Harry is the happiest man upon earth, and he is fully aware of it."

"I believe it—I believe it—that is—he acts as if he were—Never woman—;" she stopped and looked shy, at being thus about to eulogise her husband.

"You need not be afraid of me, Miss Thornhaugh. I am his oldest friend—You know how I love him."

"Do you—then don't call me Miss Thornhaugh, again, if you can help it—I am not ashamed of his name, and would rather, if you please, bear it."

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, Miss Thornhaugh; but really those days return in so lively a manner."

"Again!"

"No—did I call you so again?—well, I must ask your pardon again—will you grant it?"

"Will you mind what you are about if I do?"

"I won't promise that."

"Then how can I excuse you? But here he comes—Are you for us?—He is going with me to look at a new carriage, for my father.—Will you come?—oh, I forgot, you are too lazy—Stay here by the fire, according to the good old custom, while we silly ones do all the business of the world—Harry, I will be ready in one moment!" and as Vivian opened the door, she flew up stairs for her hat.

The hat was very pretty, with a plume of white feathers in it: and, muffled up in her cloak, Mrs. Vivian looked more attractive than ever.

"My dearest Iñez," said Vivian, "it is cold. Don't walk, I have ordered the carriage."

"Oh, pray don't for me — you said you wished it not to go out this morning—A horse was sick or sorry, or the coachman had a pain, in his temper, perhaps—But, dear Harry, it is only a fresh gale—You will make me ashamed by your care—We shall have the schoolmaster

abroad again, if you are not more prudent—I am half sure, Mr. Hervey, you think he is much too tender of me still."

"I don't quite think he can be," said Laurence.

"Well, that is comfortable—But do you come or no?"

"He!" said Vivian, "he must be strangely altered if he puts down his book to see the best carriage that was ever built—He does not know a phæton from a dog-cart; and how should he? Let him enjoy his fire and his chair till we come back, and then you may take him into the Park if you like."

"No—I am coming!" said Laurence rising lazily.

Why did Laurence, when the door closed after them, pause, before he offered Mrs. Vivian his arm?—Captain Vivian however bade her take it, and between the two friends, gaily laughing and chatting, she walked up Pall Mall and St. James's-street, the admiration of all

the world. Many were the eyes fixed upon her, many the heads turned round for yet one other gaze, as she passed lightly forward with an ease and grace of motion peculiarly her own; her countenance playing with bewitching smiles, and her conversation, at once careless and pointed, fascinating the attention of her companion. Her husband was, as husbands are apt to be, less sensible to charms that were for ever before him; and, if truth must be spoken, he was at that moment thinking more of the Admiral's carriage than of his own enchanting wife; while she naturally directed her conversation rather to his friend than to himself.

Laurence had passed five years in Paris—they had not been without their effect.

CHAPTER VII.

That day, and the next day, and the next, and a succession of days, were passed in this manner together. Laurence usually breakfasted in Spring Gardens. Captain Vivian as usually went out immediately afterwards, and was occupied abroad, the greater part of the day. He had been just appointed to the command of the Sybile, one of the finest ships in the navy—She was at this time lying in the river at Woolwich; and he was employed, as naval men under such circumstances are, in superintending her outfitting—without much

expectation, however, of being called into actual service.

These were the days when war languished—and a few contests on the outskirts of civilized society excited little attention among men, earnestly intent upon that grand debate, which had arisen between the things that *were*, and the things that were to be.

His friend, who had little to do with the actual business of life, under any of its various forms, remained with Mrs. Vivian and the children, lounging, in the old way, over a book by the fire; but not, in the old way, devouring its pages with the avidity of one who draws all his pleasures from the intellect. His eyes were usually wandering or abstracted, following the beautiful form of Iñez about the room, or fixed upon the page unmeaningly—Feelings, to which he had hitherto been a stranger, began to melt his heart with a seductive sweetness—Feelings, of which he rendered to himself no account, began to make that arm-chair like what the

fabled chair of the enchanter has been described—a place from which he found it impossible to move. Life, which, till now, might have been called, to him, a simple succession of ideas, assumed a new character—it became a succession of sensations—of sensations only—or rather, it appeared a succession of sensations no more—*one* sensation, the most intoxicating—the most engrossing—the influence of one predominant passion, seemed to have overpowered every other sentiment, idea, and feeling—and the charm appeared fatally attached to a certain arm-chair in Captain Vivian's drawing-room.

Iñez, innocent as a child, was, like a guileless child, entirely ignorant of the mischief she was doing; and Laurence, unaccustomed to self-examination and self-responsibility—in the habit of yielding to the present influence—of passing away his days in doing what was most agreeable, without calling himself to any account for the use of his time or his talents, abandoned himself to the indulgence of his

present sensations, without examining into their source, or questioning their propriety.

Laurence Hervey was no profligate — He abhorred profligacy — it disgusted his taste, and offended his moral sense: but a sceptic in religion; a questioner of all those common-place rules of order and morals which, under one form or other, have been reverenced by the mass of mankind, since civilized society first was constituted. An enemy, on system, to all which bore the character of rigidity or constraint in social intercourse; the indulgence which he was ever ready to extend to others, he fatally permitted in himself.

That his sentiments were assuming a form which might militate against his own future happiness, was a reflection, which, had it occurred, would have been dismissed with contempt;—that they could possibly interfere with the happiness of others, would have been scouted as ridiculous. For what passed within the secret recesses of his own breast, he held

himself accountable to no being in existence. He had rejected the teaching of that master who said—" from within, out of the heart of man," &c. &c. Why should he not delight himself in the cup presented to his lips? What, if the draught did intoxicate his senses, did dim his perceptions, did throw his reason in flattering delights—What was that to any one but himself.

Iñez had, as we have said, become a reader. She had failed to inspire her husband with the same taste. The delight with which her imagination, naturally powerful, had collected the brilliant images of poetry; the pleasure with which her intellect had unclosed to the perception of philosophy and truth, had been of necessity confined to her own bosom. Her gratification, therefore, may be imagined, when, in the fine taste and accomplished mind of Laurence, she found what she had sought in vain — sympathy in all her new pleasures, and the power to guide and assist her dawning faculties.

She might now be seen, the docile pupil, sitting on a low chair by the side of Laurence's sanctuary, reading to him, or with him—questioning him—listening to him—laying all the confusion of her struggling thoughts, springing as it were into life, before him. Did the voice of the teacher falter, as he busied himself in giving some order to the brilliant incoherency of her ideas? Did the eye of the teacher beam a too soft approbation, as with a glowing countenance and voice, which was melody itself, she read some of the sweetest snatches of poetry? If they did, the unsuspecting Iñez never, for one instant, perceived it. Secure in the purity of her own heart, the dangerous infection of passion was here without power. That Laurence liked her now so much better than he used to do, pleased her, for Harry's sake, and for her own. She fancied that she must be very much altered for the better, when Mr. Hervey approved—She had been long accustomed to look upon him as one whose decisions were undoubtedly right.

"But how you do sigh, Mr. Hervey, this morning, over this Italian lesson! Is it too stupid an operation to expound Petrarch to me? I confess he is often tedious; yet, do you know, in spite of all his conceits, his verses have an air of truth which interests me. I have heard many ridicule the idea of his constancy and fervour —they say his passion was the mere indulgence of his imaginative vein—that the heart had nothing to do with it. I don't feel it so. I think I read a history of deep and genuine feeling in these verses. Here is none of that self-gratulation which the mere poet would feel in the indulgence of his fancy; these are the regrets and self-questionings of one, enslaved in his own despite, who is wasting powers, which he feels were entrusted for better things, in vain aspirations—in forbidden wanderings—But you are silent—you don't think so?" She had been running on, with her eyes fixed upon her footstool, as if she were thinking aloud, rather than addressing him. His eyes—he was sitting

a little behind her—had not moved from her face. "You are not one who can compassionate such a state of weakness—one from whom he might hope to find; '*sperar trovar pietà non che perdonà.*'"

"Why do you think that?" was the quiet interrogation.

"Oh, I am in the habit of supposing you proof against these sort of follies. I have an impression that you *very* wise men, (you know it is the fashion here to consider you of this order,) are not susceptible of such weaknesses."

"But was not Petrarch a *very* wise man?"

"Yes, but then, he was a man of imagination.

"Which I certainly am not—You are quite right in what you say;"—and he sighed again.

"We will have done with him now, however," said she cheerfully, "for you sigh, just as poor little Georgy does over her lesson—

really, Mr. Hervey, it never struck me before, but I think you are very good-natured—All this must weary you to death—you must hate my new wisdom even more than you did my old folly—only it would look so common-place to own it—I can conceive nothing more tiresome to an accomplished mind, than talking over subjects like these with such a mere beginner as myself. You really are very good-natured."

"That is not quite the proper term to use," said he again, with great sweetness. "It is possible that there may exist other charms for me besides those of erudition—candour, and ingenuous good sense, for example."

"Yes, I might have been sure of that—you are now as easily pleased, as you were formerly impossible to please. Did you learn that happy art at Paris, Mr. Hervey? Doubtless it was worth while to spend five years in the acquisition."

"I have not acquired it. I am more hard to be pleased than ever. Nothing pleases me

in the whole world, I think, but sitting in this chair and playing with your children."

"Truth will out—The reading is a bore, then."

"I am sure I never said that. I don't profess to live in the palace of truth, but I could not be so egregious a liar, as to say that the sweetest occupation in the world was a bore," said he, more warmly than usual.

Iñez coloured a little: "I am glad of it," rallying her spirits: "I do own, that reading with so accomplished a tutor is a great assistance to my scanty wits. By the time my children are old enough to be the better for it, I hope I shall be as dry, and as horrid, and as wise, and as every thing—as any she professor of them all."

"How you do talk. May heaven avert such a consequence! One would rather all the books in the world were burned. But I see no danger."

"Nor I neither," laughing, "I am an invete-

rate dunce. Well, so be it—There is one will not care—that's my dearest Harry. There's another will not break her heart about it—that's myself. There's a third," turning playfully to him, "must reconcile it to himself as well as he can. There is no remedy, we cannot either of us come up to your ideal of perfection, Mr. Hervey; but we expect you to love us nevertheless."

The eyes of Laurence had an unusual expression.

"I will do any thing, however impossible, if you will only not call me Mr. Hervey. Why am I not *Laurence* to you—Miss Vivian calls me Laurence—I am Laurence to every one but you; let me hear you call me Laurence," in an earnest manner.

"Laurence!" as if considering it carelessly—But however carelessly, the syllables thrilled through his veins. "No, I can't do it. You know in former days you inspired me with such profound respect and awe, I should as soon

think of calling my father by his proper name."

"Your father!" with an air of excessive mortification, "Your father! do you look upon me as a father? Good heavens! how provokingly you speak!"

"And, good heavens, how easily provoked you are! No indeed—*Laurence*—Will that do? I did not mean to offend you. I don't mean, with all your wisdom, that you look exactly as venerable as my father; though, truth to tell, I imagined you too great a philosopher to care how you looked—Mistaken there, it seems. Oh, men, men—But really, you have taken such pains to impose yourself upon us, for one of the wise, that in my simplicity I certainly did respect you. But if you are so unaccountable, you may rely upon it, that I shall not continue in that error."

"I hate respect."

"You hate respect! Oh, monstrous! well, I I do think you the most susceptible person to *disrespects*, that ever made such a confession."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Oh! upon my word, I have done," rising: "You look so angry—I will not say one word more. Indeed, Mr. Hervey, your temper...."

"Angry!—Temper!—Am I angry—Do you care one atom whether I am in the most detestable temper in the world. Can any thing connected with me, give you one instant's uneasiness? If I thought one being on earth cared for me, or my humours, I would soon correct them. If I thought my irritation a matter of the slightest regard to any one, I could be as a lamb;" rising and following to where she stood by the fire.

"I wish you would then, be like a lamb, Mr. Hervey, for really....."

"You called me Laurence, just now."

"Did I?—Well, that put you in a passion—so I will not do it again."

"A passion! How cruel!—but 'tis no matter. I made you hate me at the beginning of our acquaintance—You always did—you

always must, hate me—*secretly*, though your kindness makes you endeavour to hide it—but I detest concealments, if you do hate me, tell me so at once,—I am gone."

"How you misconceive me! How can you suppose, that I ever intend to offend you?—How can you suppose, that I bear malice for what I have always honoured in you, as a mark of your genuine friendship for Harry? Don't renew those days of misunderstanding. You know how Harry values you—How I value you for his sake. Do not indulge the only fault you have—this odd, capricious way of misconceiving things. I am sure I don't know what I said, but you know I did not mean to say what should hurt you; believe me, I have corrected in myself the love of being provoking—Believe....."

"Don't ask me to believe any thing—don't go on, generous Iñez—don't trouble yourself about me. Every thing you do, every thing you say, every thing you look, is perfect in its

excellence! Forgive me, I am capricious—I am unreasonable—it is my infirmity—forgive me——"

She looked surprised, yet she felt pleased; she had always misdoubted his regard before, and her innocent heart rejoiced in this proof that she was dear to him.

"There is nothing to forgive—it would be strange if I could not tolerate a little singularity, in one so singularly dear to Harry," his countenance fell—she answered it, as it were by instinct, without comprehending its expression exactly—"So very kind to myself; and for whom I have so true a regard—But indeed I never intend to try your temper," looking up so sweetly in his face, that Laurence felt as if his heart were choking him.

The door opened, and Captain Vivian came in.

"Have you got me a box?" was the first question of Iñez, turning to him with the most perfect and frank composure; while

Laurence turned *his* face to the mantle-piece, and for a moment seemed busy considering the china vase thereon.

"Yes, my love—But you will excuse my attendance at this German opera—an Italian affair is as much as I can well digest, you know; and I want to dine at the Club with an old friend or two—But, Laurence, you are a capital fellow, you delight in all this unintelligible stuff, I am sure you will dine with Iñez, and attend her—You are a fanatico, you know, and can be immured in an Opera box a whole evening without a complaint, to hear Haitzinger.—Will you do duty to-night? Iñez has set her heart upon going. Will you take care of her?"

A guilty pleasure throbbed at the heart of Laurence, as, now lifting up his head, he spoke thickly enough. "I shall be very glad to be of service,"—was all that he said.

"I am very sorry, my dear Iñez," said Captain Vivian, "that I have not been able to

get you a box that you will like: I went about it sadly too late, and could only find one in the third tier—you will be out of the way, but as you go chiefly for the music, you will not much care, I hope."

"Oh! not in the least—I will take little Julia Sullivan with me, as I promised—and then I need not imprison Mr. Hervey. You can leave me without compunction (turning gaily to him) when you are tired of me."

The heart of Laurence was beating fast—beating in a way that ought to have alarmed himself—but self-distrust, was a lesson this philosopher had yet to learn.

He dared not utter the words that were rising to his lips, so affected not to hear her.

"Why, Laurence," said Captain Vivian, "you look quite out of sorts—You are the strangest fellow in the world. If it really will plague you to go to-night—why not say so at once?"

"Do I look as though it would plague me," said Laurence recovering himself; "I am sure

I did not intend it. I am sure it will give me the greatest pleasure to attend Mrs. Vivian: and I will now go home to dress, for it is late," and he left the room.

"I am afraid," said Iñez, "that you have trespassed too much upon his complaisance, Harry—He is evidently out of humour. I had better give it up."

"He out of humour! what in the name of heaven does it matter if he is—You shall do no such thing. Surely he may make a little sacrifice of his whims for your amusement. I am very sorry, my dear, I can't go with you in his place, but I have entangled myself with an engagement I cannot well break; never doubting that Hervey intended to go. Take little Julia, and then he can leave the box when he is weary—which he is of every thing upon earth, sooner than any man I know."

And after this Captain Vivian and his wife sauntered away the remaining hour until dressing time, with their little children—Happy

in perfect confidence, in sincere affection, in cheerful interests, neither requiring nor desirous of extraordinary excitement; content with the peaceful joys of their placid and innocent existence.

Laurence, meanwhile, walked to his lodgings in a tumult of pleasure. He neither asked himself why, nor wherefore. His mind dwelt intensely on the delight of passing one evening alone—alone, to all intents and purposes, with Iñez; for Julia was but a child of eleven years old. To enjoy the society of this charming woman exclusively, was all he allowed himself to wish; and the great addition which the absence of the husband gave to his prospect of enjoyment, seemed to escape his observation.

CHAPTER VIII.

As the clock struck six, Laurence, dressed with an elegance and care not usual with him, though it became him well, entered Captain Vivian's drawing-room.

Iñez was already there, looking more beautiful than ever—as if to complete his satisfaction. A dress of white crape gave a peculiar delicacy and grace to her figure; her dark hair was a little more studiously arranged than usual, and a few jewels were shining there. Captain Vivian, hat in hand, was taking leave. It would have been difficult to say which of the three made the most charming appearance. Laurence, as with languid ele-

gance he leaned against the marble chimney-piece, his eyes fixed upon Mrs. Vivian—or she, in her beautiful white drapery, making a playful adieu to her husband; as he, with that delightful union of refined politeness and naval frankness, which distinguished him, even among the most attractive members of his profession, was taking his leave. The door closed, and he was gone—and Laurence . . . . . .

He sat down in his accustomed chair, as Iñez placed herself by the fire, in a state of enjoyment so perfect, that he neither spoke, nor wished to speak, moved, nor wished to move—and to have remained thus passive for ages, without change, or desire of change, appeared to him natural, nay, delightful.—A state, some mystics have vainly endeavoured to render attainable by the human soul, when engaged in contemplating the divine perfection of its Creator, was reached at once by the witchery of human passion; by the witchery of that passion so mysterious in all its influences.

Iñez, who, far from divining his feelings, imagined him still a little out of humour, took her embroidery, and amused herself with a thousand trifling thoughts that passed through her cheerful imagination — while Laurence might be said not even to think, so entirely was he absorbed in sensation.

Dinner was announced.

" Come, Mr. Hervey! Must I awaken you? —From what distant region must I recal your thoughts?—Have you been 'unsphering the spirit of Plato?' or what?—But philosophers must dine, like other mortals, and we shall be late—I have a wish to hear the Overture."

He rose and gave her his arm still without saying a word; but when, with a look of unfeigned astonishment, not unmingled with vexation, she said, " What can be the matter, Mr. Hervey?—If you really are indisposed to go, be candid and say so.—I am sure I wish to be a trouble to no one." He again rallied.

" Not indisposed—Perhaps out of spirits—

mine are capricious, wretched to myself and others, like every thing about me. No—music to-night is, I believe, almost the only thing I could endure; it will charm this vile temper out of me—Have patience with me, sweetest Iñez—I beg your pardon .... Mrs. Vivian—I really don't know what I say—I will behave better after dinner."

Iñez was again surprised—Something seemed reversed in her situation; she could not understand it. He of whom she stood formerly in awe—the severe censor of all she did and said — the unimpeachable arbiter of all that was right or wrong—the cool, impassable Laurence—the man neither to be influenced by her smiles, nor moved by her caprices, seemed all at once to have renounced his character for superiority and wisdom; to be as fanciful, capricious, and wayward, as she could have been in her best days, and to acknowledge his folly, and solicit her indulgence, with a humility utterly foreign to his nature.

At a loss to account for all this, she felt compelled unwillingly to admit that Laurence, like the rest of his sex, could have his moments of caprice and unreasonableness; and though she perhaps reverenced him a little the less for the discovery, she liked him the better, and felt interested in what appeared to her a state of suffering.

So all dinner time, she attempted, by every sweet attention, and by the most engaging cheerfulness to restore his spirits—and Laurence, after a few glasses of Madeira, began to appear better at ease, and to converse in his usually agreeable manner.

The children appeared at dessert. While one occupied Mrs. Vivian's knee, Laurence took the other—the illusion was complete—He fancied himself the master of that table, at the lower end of which he sat, the father of the child he held in his arms, the husband of the adorable being who presided—It is not too much to affirm, that he actually felt as if he were

all this.—Passion is a brief insanity; its illusions are often literally as perfect and complete. Under this momentary hallucination Laurence felt perfectly happy, all his turbulent emotions subsided into the calmness of satisfaction—and had he been the husband of her youth, he could scarcely have more gaily adjusted Mrs. Vivian's cloak, or handed her to her carriage, or sprung to her side, with a more frank appearance of satisfaction.

The intelligent author of Stello has observed, that even the closing or unclosing of the eyes is sufficient to break the chain of thought, and to introduce a perfectly new series of associations—This is far more, certainly, the case with respect to change of place and scene. No sooner had Laurence entered the carriage than the vain illusion vanished from his imagination —thoughts of a far different character succeeded—a gloom black as night gathered round his brow—and he again appeared a prey to the most tormenting reflections.

Iñez looked at him with terror, almost with dislike. His manner had suddenly become as cold, harsh, and distant, as it had been, ten minutes before, cordial and agreeable--she was glad when they stopped at Admiral Sullivan's door, and her little friend, in ecstacy at the thoughts of her first opera, sprung into the carriage, with a "Dearest Mrs. Vivian, how very good of you." Mrs. Vivian, relieved by her presence, and pleased with her delight, began to talk immediately to her. There was much to say between them, and not a word for the silent Laurence; who, now really out of humour, hung back in a corner of the carriage, and uttered not one syllable.

When they alighted, however, he seized Mrs. Vivian's arm, almost rudely, in the press, and, without speaking, took her to her box. Here little Julia, being placed in the best situation for seeing the stage, Mrs. Vivian took the shaded seat on the other side; and Laurence, drawing his chair behind hers, leaned his arm

with a sort of desperate defiance of his conscience on the back of it; and, thus concealed from general observation, remained motionless and silent, in the dangerous contemplation of a beauty and sweetness which already produced an effect upon his senses, more enervating than intoxication.

He strove to swallow down the sighs that struggled from his overloaded heart, lest they should, as they once before had done, excite her attention. He strove to repress every external sign of the feelings which overpowered him, while he abandoned his inner self, without resistance, to their seductions. He thought himself a man of honour; for the universe he would not have wronged his friend—no—not by a word—but thought was his own, into that region his scruples extended not—To adore the wife thus confided to his care, was no injury, so long as that adoration was confined to his own bosom—to share in these sweet influences no crime, while their effects were hidden

from every eye—nay, even to desire to possess in some degree a peculiar place in her affections, if such might be his most fortunate distinction,—no sinful ambition, while no syllable of his passionate attachment, was breathed to her ear. Why should he deny himself that, which, if evil, could hurt no one but himself? —He would delight himself with the charm of his present existence, so long as that charm might be enjoyed in security—when it was withdrawn—why, then—*alors comme alors*. Such were Mr. Hervey's ideas of his duty to his friend and to himself—such the knowledge this accomplished philosopher possessed of human nature, and of his own heart!

The idea of accountableness to any tribunal but that of his own reason, never once crossed his mind.—A sceptic upon principle—he would have rejected the idea, with disdain, as the most superstitious weakness. Nay, would have despised himself, had he believed, that his virtue required those ordinary incitements of

hope and terror, which govern the vulgar of mankind.

Mrs. Vivian was absorbed by the music, to which she listened, and was some time without noticing Laurence—at last she turned suddenly round:

"Mr. Hervey, have you been asleep."

"Yes, I believe I have," with a smile.

"Or is this a mere pretence?—You must have listened to that last song—that delightful song: I thought you loved music."

"I do like music, exceedingly."

"Then listen, again!" as the voices of Schroeder and Haitzinger made vocal those notes, which the very muse herself whispered to the author of Fidelio.

"You feel that," said Laurence.

"I do, indeed."

"You could be that page?"

"Oh, yes, I could, for Harry."

"Happy Harry!" rather sighed than uttered.

"You think so, then, at last," with sudden animation: "you do, at last, believe him happy?"

"Happy!—Good heavens!—To be so loved, Iñez, for one second—I would wear the poisoned shirt of Dejanira—I would be content to be torn limb from limb, by wild horses. But for one moment to be so blessed!"—she looked astonished; "But no woman will ever love me," said he, checking himself with a forced laugh.

"Nor would I advise them.—You are so odd that you would almost drive a woman that loved you mad."

"No one will ever care enough for me—... Even *you*, though I am Captain Vivian's friend —almost his brother—even you, if I were to die to-morrow, would smile the next day just as sweetly as you do now."

"You are very unjust to say so," said she, much hurt. "Why is it your pleasure to suppose me, the most heartless creature breathing?"

" Did I say so?—You heartless?—I think you all heart—all tenderness—all feeling. I only presumed to believe myself not worth a thought. Forgive me—you cannot tell—*you*, gifted with the ceaseless sunshine of a happy heart—you cannot even surmise what it is, to be the victim of morbid thoughts that eat into one's very being. Forgive me, I did not mean to offend you, heaven knows; but —but—. . . I have been in an execrable humour all this evening. I will shake it off:"— and he rose from his chair precipitately, and left the box.

She felt sorry for him—half angry with him —interested by him—wished to know what preyed upon his mind—thought she would tell Harry—she would do all she could to cheer him.

He came back, looking more composed.

" That is right.—Come, Mr. Hervey, and sit by me—Don't give way to these fancies.— You used to school me—let me return the good

office. It is, indeed, unworthy a man like you; a man so gifted, to be the sport of melancholy fancies. 'Tis true, you have few natural relations, but is not Harry your brother?—Am not I almost your sister?—are not our children yours? Don't say no one loves you; you know how *we* love you—*en attendant mieux*," smiling, "be content—And now look round this brilliant circle of beauties, and fall in love for yourself as fast as you can—that will be the true remedy—I confess, I should have a malicious pleasure in seeing you caught."

"Well, give me your opera-glass, and let me try."

She held it out—he took it—looked round the house with it a second or two, and then put it in his pocket. After this he resumed his cheerfulness, and regarded her with the sweet and calm expression which she loved to see in his eyes.

She went home relieved about him, and satisfied with herself, to sleep in innocence and

waken in peace.—He to toss restless from side to side, feebly endeavouring to repel the thick coming fancies which swarmed around his pillow.

CHAPTER IX.

The next morning when Mr. Hervey entered the house in Spring Gardens, he became aware that something more than common was the matter. An air of hurry and confusion pervaded the usually well ordered mansion. He opened the dining-room door, no one was there; presently, Mrs. Vivian appeared; her face was beaming with excitement, yet her eyes were red, and her cheeks blistered with tears:

"Oh, Laurence!—Oh, Mr. Hervey!"

"What is the matter, my dearest Mrs. Vivian?"

" I ought to rejoice—Heaven knows I do"—and she burst into tears.

" What is it, sweetest Mrs. Vivian?—what can have happened?"—he spoke warmly, for he felt innocently—sympathy in her distress was the uppermost sensation of the moment—His vagrant and sinful fancies had vanished with the wholesome light of day—as the bad and evil spirits are fabled to " slip to their several graves," before the rising dawn. He felt then, as he ought always to have done.

" What is it?—tell me.—Has any thing happened to Harry?—Can I be of the slightest service?"

" I ought to rejoice—It is very honourable to him—But, oh, Mr. Hervey!—How can a wife —You will despise me—but, ah, how can I!—How can I exult, as he does, in a service of honourable danger?"

" What service?—what do you mean?"

" He is appointed to the command of the secret expedition about to sail from Ports-

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mouth—He was apprized of it last night.—Little did I think, as I sat in vain security—little did I think, that I was losing the last hours of his society in idle dissipation!"

"To the command of the expedition!" said Laurence, "this *is* honourable—My dear Mrs. Vivian—do forgive me—you a sailor's wife! you must not weep at this," taking her hand and pressing it affectionately. "It must gratify Harry so excessively. It must gratify every one who loves him."

"Believe me, it does—it does gratify me—But, ah, Heaven!—it is the first time." And again the tears rained down her cheeks.

Laurence was himself now—A circumstance of interest, belonging to the events of real life, dispels, like a charm, the illusions of the imagination. Her genuine distress, the honourable distinction shewn to his friend, interest in Harry's danger, in Harry's success, honest and affectionate interest, drove the hateful intoxication from his mind; as a sudden shock will

sober the brain, disordered by the grosser intoxication of wine.

"My dearest Mrs. Vivian, weep with me.—Be certain I honour these tears—But recollect you are a sailor's wife. Consider how Harry adores you. Repress this weakness before him. Shew him that you are worthy to share the destiny of so honourable a man. You must not enfeeble his resolution by your sorrow; you must not exhaust his energy, in striving with your distress."

"You are right—Oh, you are right!—as you always are. No, my Harry, I will not pain you by a look of regret—I will bid you go in God's name—and never cease to pray to God for you till you return."

A tear twinkled in the philosopher's eyes—those eyes which never wept—He pressed her hand—"God will preserve him, to bless you."

Captain Vivian had been out, his hasty knock was heard at the door, he came in quickly—Laurence, my dear fellow, I am glad

you are come—you will congratulate me heartily—which this foolish girl," putting his arm round her waist, and pressing her fondly to his bosom, " cannot find heart to do."

She lifted up her face, and smiled in his, " I will try though, my dearest, dearest Harry —I will try to rejoice in what rejoices you, as well as Mr. Hervey.—But when must you go?"

" To-night."

" To-night!—Good heavens!" with a sort of cry.

" I must be off for Portsmouth to-night, but it will be some days before I sail. What say you to running down there, and giving your benediction to my charming Sybile—before she sails—Will you, my love?—Will you start with me to-night?—Laurence will run down with us, I am sure, and bring you safe back to town—Laurence, I *do* take a friend's freedom with your time."

Laurence was at that moment cursing himself for the thoughts of the passed night, and

vowing to his own soul, that if entrusted with the care of Iñez, he would guard her with the jealous care of a father; he would justify the unsuspecting reliance of his friend, he would not even *think* what ought by possibility to offend him.—The purity of his sentiments seemed as by a miracle restored, he answered cheerfully and without hesitation:

"My dear Harry, you will really offend me if you speak in that way—You know I only live to be of service to you, Mrs. Vivian, and the children—Employ me in any way, every way, my good fellow. You know how happy you make me."

"I was quite sure you would say and feel so, Mr. Hervey," said Iñez, giving him her hand, with the sweetest expression of countenance. "Ah, Harry! I shall like to go with you—to see your ship—to see you sail—Ah, Heaven!" and again she burst into tears.

"My dearest Iñez!"

"Oh, forgive me!—this is the first day—

I have not had time to rally—I shall be very well behaved in a little while—I won't cry at Portsmouth—but one must have it out once. My dear, dear Harry—Don't be ashamed of me, if I cannot bear it just at first—I shall be better soon,"—and she ran out of the room, flew to her children, and, having deluged them with her tears, washed her eyelids, and composed her appearance, she came down into the dining-room once more, with a gentle serenity settled on her countenance.

Harry had in the meanwhile been detailing to Laurence all the particulars of the appointment. The Sybile had gone round to Portsmouth a week or two before; and in her Captain Vivian was to sail, to take the command of an expedition, of which the object was as yet a secret. All he knew was, that he was to sail immediately, and with sealed orders—He explained as briefly as he could the situation of his private affairs—told Laurence that, in case any thing should happen to him, he had ap-

pointed him the executor to his will, and the guardian of his children; commended the little ones to his tenderness and care—and, above all, entreated him to watch over and protect his Iñez.

"You understand her as well, perhaps better than I do—you see what a heart she has. Neither her father, nor Miss Vivian, the only two near connections we either of us possess, would be capable of supporting and consoling her under an affliction such as, Heaven bless her—she would feel, for a poor fellow like me, if I never came back again. Be kind to her, Laurence.—Even you have been sometimes harsh and unjust with her—she does not deserve it.—If ever there was an angel on this earth, it is she.—Be tender to her for my sake."

The heart of Laurence responded to the generous confidence of the husband—"As there is a God in Heaven,"—the most habitual sceptics, in moments of solemnity, appeal in spite of themselves to a higher power—"As there is

a God in heaven—I will be every thing to her that you can wish—I will guard her as the apple of my eye—protect her as the honour of my mother—defend her and keep her as my own soul."

"Thank you, Laurence—I know I can trust you—Here she comes—Heaven bless her—how sweetly quiet she looks."

The rest of the day was passed in busy preparations, in which Laurence was engaged like a member of the family; and if at times his admiration of the conduct of Iñez might appear too excessive, no busy throbbings at the heart reminded him that it might be criminal.

At ten o'clock in the evening they started with four horses in Captain Vivian's carriage, for Portsmouth—Laurence insisted upon travelling outside—he would not intrude upon the last moments of tender sorrow—He would allow Harry the opportunity for being as weak and as womanly as he pleased—and Captain Vivian, it must be confessed, took advantage of

the occasion—and Iñez and he, weeping in each other's arms—exchanging vows and blessings, and endearments, and prayers, passed that night of sorrow in all the hallowed sweetness of sincere affection.

Two days they spent at Portsmouth; two beautiful days of fine shining weather.—The radiant sun and clear blue heavens reflected on the bosom of the glittering ocean, studded with vessels of every description. The beautiful Sybile floating gracefully on the water, her light spars and lofty masts rising in the air, and tracing their airy lines upon the sky. Long, and often, and tenderly, and painfully, did Iñez gaze upon that vessel, which was to bear away her husband—often did she walk, silently listening to the low beating of the waves, summoning courage for that parting, which she found it almost impossible to endure. There was much to be done, and she was necessarily a good deal alone; those moments were not wasted, they were spent in that best

exercise, the fortifying of the heart by reflection, to meet approaching evil.

The hour, the fatal hour, at last arrived—Captain Vivian's boat lay at the sallyport—the carriage of Iñez stood ready at the inn door—Vivian had arranged with Laurence that he should not accompany him from shore, but placing Iñez in her carriage the moment the parting was over, should instantly return with her to town, and to her children.

She stands with a beating heart in the inn parlour, listening to the returning footsteps of her husband—returning, it might be, for the last time. The colour flutters in her cheek—now dyes it with a sudden crimson—now, as the blood retreats to the heart, a deadly paleness succeeds.—Still she struggles for composure to support this dread parting as she ought to do. Quick footsteps are on the stairs—she presses her hands tightly upon her bosom, to still the almost insupportable beating within.—The two friends enter.—Harry, hurried,

agitated, catches her in his arms—his fervent kisses are on her brow—her lips—his "God bless my Iñez—God in heaven bless and keep my Iñez," faltering, in broken accents, from his tongue. Her arms are folded round his neck—she answers his caresses by her low inarticulate murmurs, she cannot speak—she falters—she reels—her head swims round—one last, fervent embrace—He must be gone—he places her in the arms of Laurence, with "Heaven bless you—take care of her"—and Harry Vivian has left all he loves best upon earth, and is hurrying down the High-street, dashing, as he goes along, the signs of tenderness from his manly cheek.

Was Laurence worthy to receive this pledge of confidence? was he worthy to be entrusted with the sacred treasure, thus deposited under the guardianship of his honour? Alas! he who has indulged in sinful longings, in unjustifiable wishes, he who has foregone the inner purity of the heart, may vow to himself that his

actions shall be squared by the precise rule of rectitude—that no temptation shall allure him from the direct path of truth and honour—he may vow sincerely, but he vows in vain. Hasty, though honest, resolutions, where corruption, unresisted, festers in the bosom, feebly resist the force of rising passion. Sin is within—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see* God,"—but cursed are they who nourish a secret wickedness—they *see* God in his evidence, a clear, discerning conscience, no more. Their eyes are darkened, their perception of things impaired—To their distorted apprehension, right becomes wrong, and wrong right, evil good, and good evil; till crime, arrayed in those flattering colours with which the perverted imagination loves to adorn her, displaces the image of virtue in the soul. This is true of most crimes—Seldom do they utterly possess a man until his moral vision has been impaired by corrupt secret contemplations, and he becomes, at last, in great measure, the victim

of his own blindness. It is most especially true of those sins which bear a relation to the softer passions; those insidious betrayers, so deceitful in all their influences.

Iñez had not fainted, but she could not at first stand, and Laurence continued to hold her in his arms, though it was with difficulty he could stand himself—he supported her to the window, and threw it open. As the fresh air blew over her face, the colour returned, and with a few convulsive sobs, the breath of life revived within her bosom.

"Is he really gone?"—were her first words.

"He is, indeed—for his sake, be comforted."

"I am—I shall be—thank you, Mr. Hervey; you are very kind—My dear Harry—Heaven bless him,"—and then the tears ran fast and silently down her cheeks.

Laurence, who had expected a storm, was relieved by this gentleness, and melted by her soft and patient air.

"What will you do?" said he.

"Oh! go to my children—take me to my children—I shall be better when I have seen them. Ah! Mr. Hervey, how little one thinks what the word *parting* means!"

"Your carriage is waiting."

"I am ready."

Laurence soon placed her within, sprang to her side; every thing was prepared, the carriage started immediately, and Portsmouth was speedily left behind.

Laurence sat silent and immoveable in one corner of the carriage; while Iñez, her face covered with her handkerchief, sank into the other, silently weeping over all her fond recollections.

His sensations it would be difficult to describe, as, alone with the only woman he had ever found it possible to love, in a carriage, that most perfect of solitudes, he seemed severed from the universe, and only existing in her. She, however, who was innocence itself, never

even felt that *alone*, so inexpressibly precious to him; and after having wept for some time, till calmed and relieved, her tears ceased of themselves, she wiped her eyes; and, having looked out of the window, as a sort of preliminary, anxious to shew her sense of his sympathy and kindness, she addressed him with an air of reliance and confidence, as if certain of finding support and comfort in his friendship and his wisdom. He was not insensible to the appeal, and exerted himself to talk in his usually agreeable manner. They talked of her future plans—of her children—of how she would occupy herself till Harry's return. Iñez, with the cheerful readiness of a healthy mind, having already imagined a thousand schemes for cheating the weary hours. Soon the smiles of hope revisited her lips, as her sanguine imagination passed hastily over the space that was to intervene before her husband should be restored to her arms. While Laurence, though his tones were unusually soft, and his eyes

bent too pensively upon her, preserved, with some effort, that appearance of tranquillity which he had rigidly enjoined to himself.

CHAPTER X.

The travellers reached London before tea time, and were received in Spring Gardens by the stately Miss Vivian, whom Harry had requested to give her company to his wife during his absence. Not that either of the two very much liked Miss Vivian; for the precision of her manners and the formality of her ideas, suited ill with their own cheerful *insouciance*, but they both felt instinctively that Iñez was too young, and too beautiful, to be left absolutely without protection, and agreed under that convenient form, "it will be better," to invite her

to pass the time in Spring Gardens. Iñez, indeed, might have gone to Middleton Court, but, besides that she wished to remain in London, where she should be on the spot to receive the speediest intelligence of her husband, the Admiral and his faithful Pylades, Mr. Roper, had done a most unusual thing for them —they had gone a long journey into Ireland, to visit an old naval friend of the Admiral's, and were to be absent some weeks.

Miss Vivian lived in a very lovely cottage on that beautiful range of hills rising from the Thames and terminating in the village of Roehampton. There she had, by her persevering gardening, converted a few acres of ground, into a perfect paradise; in the centre of which stood her little villa, built, as it is the pleasure of some to prefer them, with a number of low rooms, and surrounded by a roofed verandah, which, invented to repel the piercing beams of an Italian sun, effectually excludes the cheerful light and agreeable heat of an English one.

The rooms were small and inconvenient; as if contrived, to shew how far elegant furniture and tasteful arrangement might triumph over defects of proportion. Neatness, elegance, order, and propriety, are, it is true, excellent things, and without them, life speedily degenerates into a brutal and intolerable affair; but there is a neatness, order, and propriety, so still, so cold, so passionless, that both the heart and imagination receive a sudden chill on entering where they reside. It was so at Bellevue, the drawing-room so delicately pure, as if that moment fresh from the hands of the painter—the furniture so perfectly, yet so immoveably, arranged, that it appeared like presumption to move a chair out of its place—the book-shelves stored with elegantly bound volumes, too elegant to be handled or to be read—the cold, composed mistress of the house, every fold of her dress, every curl of her hair, in the most perfect order; as if passion, hurry, and emotion, were alike strangers to her bosom and to

her household—...Captain Vivian and Iñez never visited Bellevue, but they felt the day insupportably long; Iñez endeavoured to be cheerful and pleasant, but her pretty mouth was distorted by inward yawns, and, in her efforts to avoid an uncivil silence, she perpetually made blunders and uttered platitudes, which Miss Vivian was certain to take up in her composed manner, and shew off to the best advantage—while Captain Vivian played with the children—talked to Miss Vivian's large, solemn-looking dog—walked to the window—strolled into the garden—and hugged Iñez for joy at their release, when they were shut up in the carriage to go home.

Iñez could not even now help considering Miss Vivian's visit as a necessary evil, but trusted its continuance would be rendered less irksome to all parties, by the incessant business in which she was usually engaged. For this lady was eminently a committee woman; a member of societies, a drawer up, and reader

of reports; a frequenter of meetings where great lords and gentlemen play at business, and affect eloquence to please busy single women of much time and much money. She was a busy inspector of the poor, an enemy to all indiscriminate charity; an especial enemy to all Sunday relaxation; to all idleness, all carelessness, all extravagance. She was one indeed whose activity would have been invaluable, had it been united with that "love," that gentle indulgent spirit of love, which He, who knew the heart, has declared to be the foundation of all social virtue—But, animated by no such sentiment, she walked, a cold and spectral image of charity; serving too often to disgust those who wished to do good by the manner of doing it—and to reconcile those whose good works were the accidental effect of impulse alone, to their own negligent and careless good nature.

The effect she had produced upon the mind of Iñez, had been certainly hurtful as far as it

extended. Miss Vivian, who appeared to her so unamiable and tiresome, she knew to be reputed an excellent person; and she was tempted too hastily to conclude, that she owed somewhat of her unamiableness to her excellences. The mistake is common with young and ardent minds; and the soberer virtues are too often despised, because associated in idea with that coldness and insensibility of character, which render their exercise so easy.

Miss Vivian was somewhat shocked when the door opened, and Mrs. Vivian and Laurence made their appearance—it had not struck her before, but she, who wanted that charity which thinketh no evil, immediately reflected how much more proper it would have been, if the charge of Iñez from Portsmouth had been committed to herself.

Mrs. Vivian gave her a hasty welcome, and ran up stairs to her nursery. Laurence walked into the room. He felt not sorry to find Miss Vivian there. The continual restraint he had

put upon his feelings, during the long tête-à-tete, was beginning to become wearisome—and he felt relieved by the presence of a third person from that perilous charge of himself which every hour rendered more perilous—from that irksome effort at indifferent conversation, which every hour rendered more irksome.

He was glad to take possession of his accustomed chair, and indulge in silent languor, those dangerous contemplations, which were again fast corrupting the integrity of his thoughts.

The fire was blazing cheerfully, and tea was waiting for the travellers. Iñez soon appeared, her younger child in her arms, crowing and screaming with delight, patting her cheeks with its little hands, and loading her with caresses,—the elder one silent and tender, hanging on her gown, as if afraid again to lose her; she sat down on her chair, close to that occupied by Laurence. He took the eldest child in his lap, she placed the other in hers; the

little ones laughed, played, and chatted with their mother, and Laurence talked to them in that quiet joking manner, which made him a vast favourite with children. Miss Vivian sat making tea behind the hissing urn,—it was a comfortable family party.

When Laurence went to his lodgings that night, he drew his chair to the hearth, and having placed, as he was wont, (like most bachelors and some married men,) a foot on each hob, engrossing the whole fire, he began to reflect upon the events of the day; and for the first time seriously to ask himself the question, what were his feelings, what were his views, and what, under his circumstances, he ought to do? In spite of his self-delusion, he found it difficult to allay certain fears to which the various emotions of the last few hours had given rise; and could not divest himself of a doubt whether he were, all things considered, exactly the fittest and safest guar-

dian to whom his friend could have entrusted his wife. He could not help asking himself whether, if Harry had suspected the intense sensation with which the deposit had been received, he would, with so much satisfaction, have left his treasure almost in his arms: and whether to live in the perpetual presence of one, whose distant voice or footstep sent the blood hurrying through his veins, yet one on whom it was treachery even to cast a wish, was exactly what was most prudent and wise. Should he fly while it was yet in his power? Was not that a measure due to his own peace of mind, and to the faith pledged to his friend? Should he fly while it was yet in his power?—but was it in his power? The very idea was already insupportable. To live in perpetual self-restraint, to deny himself the pleasure of looking at, or of almost speaking to her—to feign coldness, indifference, injustice, every thing was easy—but to leave her altogether—to suffer her to forget him—to endeavour to

forget her — it seemed to him, under the infatuation of his fatal disorder, that to be cured—to learn to forget—to be restored to his usual state of insensibility, would be, of all results, the most to be deprecated; it would be to pass from life to death, from warm, animated existence, to dreary, pale monotony: and why? why should such an exchange be made? By what law was he required to annihilate feelings so exquisite—trample out, as it were, the flame that animated and exalted his heart? What! because his secret feelings, which no power on earth should ever tempt him to disclose, might, by this incomparable creature be somewhat excited, to beyond that line which frigid moralists have laid down as the proper limit of sentiment in his circumstances, was it necessary that he, like a tutored school-boy, should renounce the delights of the most generous of passions? And for what? What was this absurd monopoly which, under the name of public order, would forbid those secret aspirations of

the heart, with which public order has nothing to do—would restrict the influence of these matchless perfections to one, probably rendered insensible by too long and too secure a possession? Was he to be the dupe of all this old-world cant?—And, after all, if he felt in any real danger, would it not then be time enough to run away?

And with this conclusion, he laid his head upon his pillow, and with this conclusion he rose in the morning; resolving to be cautious—to avoid even the shadow of evil in action, and confine every tempestuous emotion to his own bosom:—and in this conclusion, he began the most dangerous system of intercourse that ever beguiled man or woman.

CHAPTER XI.

Miss Vivian, we have said, was unfortunately no companion for Iñez, who had indeed—fortunately, or unfortunately,—for that is as it may prove—no very intimate female friend—She never had possessed much taste for the sort of thing; indeed Captain Vivian had, since her marriage, stood so entirely in the relation of friend to her; their union and confidence had been so complete—that had she been blessed with a treasure of this nature—it is more than probable she would, before this, have fallen under the reproach of most young and happy wives,

and have been somewhat negligent in the performance of the duties exacted by that connection.

After her husband's departure, though she neither pined nor fretted, yet she certainly felt her spirits saddened below their usual level, and she was therefore little inclined to mix in general society. One only person possessed the art of charming her attention, and beguiling the hours, otherwise so tedious, of her widowhood: and he, having vowed to himself to taste temperately of the forbidden cup—to visit in Spring Gardens only occasionally and moderately, with due intervals, &c.—ended by passing there nearly the whole of his time.

Miss Vivian was, as we have said, a woman of business. Her mornings were occupied with meetings and committees, her evenings in drawing up, and correcting reports—Laurence and Iñez were left almost completely to themselves and to the children,—who, playing on the carpet at their feet, just sufficiently broke the

continual tête-à-tête, so as to render it less alarming, and perhaps more dangerous—The books were resumed—and were again, as erst to those unhappy victims of passion, who met the wanderer at the gates of Hades, inseparable in their melancholy immortality—the food of dangerous tempting thought. Again, the study of those poets was resumed, where Laurence found reflected all that was passing in his own bosom—again, as the sounds came softened from those beautiful lips; while with her dark and braided hair, her brow of antique mould and purest marble, she bent over the book, would he suffer his eye unchastened to fasten upon her countenance, till his very heart sickened within his breast—"*Galëotto fù il librò e chi lo scrisse*"——

Many weeks passed in this manner: Laurence engaged in a contest, in which every day he felt himself losing ground.—Yet still his resolution was preserved, and not the slightest expression of his feelings had as yet passed,

at least beyond his eyes—but his frame, not built to endure the struggles of a passion, the more destructive, because not in union with his usual system of being, began at length to yield under days and nights of passionate and hopeless excitement; his brow assumed an air of delicacy —the blue veins were visible on his transparent temples — his frame looked extenuated — his breath came and went with difficulty—his eyes burned with a gloomy concentrated fire—She noticed these changes with concern, but without the slightest suspicion of their cause.

"How pale you are grown, Mr. Hervey," said she—"what ails you?—Something, I am quite sure, is the matter. Something weighs on your spirits—I do not mean to intrude upon your confidence—yet"....

"You *never* call me Laurence—Why that odious formality?"

"You cannot mean to answer me in that ridiculous manner—I ask you whether you are ill or unhappy, and you answer, 'You never

call me Laurence.' Does that make you ill and unhappy?"

"Yes."

"Yes!" moving the chair a few paces from his, while she looked, wondering, in his face, "What are you thinking of?"

"Don't move your chair away—in pity—in pity, Iñez."

"In pity!" very much surprised.

"I am weary of restraint—I can bear these tortures no longer," he cried vehemently, as if some mighty barrier opposed to his feelings had all at once given way. "Human nature can endure them no longer—I must—I will—Iñez," imperiously, "sit down where you were before—sit down by me"—with the most pathetic earnestness—"sit down by me, or kill me at once."

"Good heavens! Mr. Hervey," said she, shocked and astonished, yet still without an idea of his meaning—"what can you mean? what is the matter? Have you any thing to tell me?—any thing of Harry?"

"Pooh, nonsense," peevishly—"I beg your pardon—Sit down where you were before—Only do that."

"And why should I?"—drawing her chair some paces farther away—"You are more inconceivable than ever this morning,—and I think scarcely deserve that I should endeavour to understand you. If you did not look so deadly pale—and wretchedly thin—I should be very angry with this—*nonsense* I will call it."

"Do I look pale?—do I look thin?—Iñez—Iñez—you see it then at last—I am a dying man."

"You,—oh, Laurence, don't say so—Surely you are not in earnest," approaching him with affectionate solicitude. "Tell me nothing is really the matter. No, you are only frightening me—nothing is really the matter—yet how *very* ill you look! what ails you? do you suffer?"

"Suffer!—good God—ah, Iñez, the bitterest tortures that ever racked the wretch expiring on the wheel are ecstacy to mine—Suffer!—merciful heaven!—Give me your hand."

She held it out—he took it in his—his, so thin, burning, and wasted—she thought, with fever—Alas! little did she suspect what fever was consuming his veins. For a moment he pressed her fingers, with an almost spasmodic contraction — then, recollecting himself, was contented with holding them in his,—while the colour faintly revisited his wasted cheek.

"Iñez, let me—let me—it does me good"—as she strove to withdraw her hand—"Sit down where you were before—I suffer"—

She obeyed—melted and alarmed at once by an expression of excessive pain, which she now, as she had once or twice done before, observed to pass over his countenance.

"Iñez, could you—if I were indeed dying—could you have the patience to sit so by me?—Will you—could you—would you—pity me?"

"I could sit by you for ever, if that would do you good, Laurence," said she, melting into tears, "but tell me—tell me—where—how do you suffer?—Ah! why have

you concealed it so long?—I see how ill you are—but surely you will take advice—A remedy must be found."

"There is no remedy," cried he passionately. "Earth affords no remedy—Heaven no cure. The grave—sleep—everlasting annihilation, is all I hope for—and all I deserve.—Don't ask me questions, but sit by me—that soothes me. Let me hold your hand: that allays my burning torture. Oh! Iñez, look at me—I forget myself!—I am lost!"

Even yet it seemed that she did not in the least understand his meaning—so unsuspecting is perfect innocence. Yet she endeavoured to withdraw her hand—he would not relinquish it. She felt very awkward at first; but ended by letting it remain as it was.

Then, in that sweet persuasive voice, so seductive to her ears, he began again to converse in his usual delightful manner, pouring his ideas, like a flood, into her mind—charming her every faculty by his eloquence, his

sensibility, his intelligence. At length, though still he abstained from alluding to his own peculiar feelings, he began to speak of *love*—that dangerous theme. He painted the passion as Iñez had imagined, but never yet witnessed its power. He spoke with an eloquence and enthusiasm rare, even in him—but he had abandoned himself, in reckless despair, to the tide of his feelings, suffering them to bear him where they would.

The lock of the door was heard to move. Laurence started, and let drop the hand. Iñez drew her chair a yard or two away; she felt the colour rising to her cheek,—the first faint signal of approaching danger. She heeded it not—that is, she thrust from her mind a thought that intruded. She would not admit it for an instant. Laurence promised himself to be more cautious; he had promised himself to *fly;* but he could no longer exist separated from the object of his passion. Death—dishonour—perdition—had he believed in such a

thing—he would rather have dared all. "To cast out his right eye—to sever his right hand" —he had not been taught in that school.

The next day the agitation was not confined to him alone. Iñez!—thoughts had at last entered that, till then, pure and innocent mind—thoughts not rejected with the indignation of a virtue all in arms—thoughts seductive to her vanity—flattering, must it be said, to her heart! Was it possible?—a man so highly gifted—he who had held so lightly by her—he —could it be? had she a power? She dismissed the idea; she would not for a moment entertain it; it was nonsense: but the idea was obstinate—it would recur. And when, the next day, as a matter of course, he took her hand, and held it, while she faintly strove to withdraw it, and he, his pleading eyes fixed upon hers—his lips pale—his countenance wasted—said "Let it be, Iñez—it is an inno-

cent indulgence—I shall not ask it long." Did she withdraw it?—No.

Laurence was no adept in seduction: but had he possessed, in perfection, all the secrets of that black and villanous art, he could scarcely have practised them with effects so fatal, as those which flowed from his own infirmity of purpose. He struggled: but he struggled feebly. He strove with half a wish. He would, like Macbeth—"not have played false—and yet unfairly won." He would have indulged a culpable passion, yet leave unstained his friend's honour and his own. He shrank from the path which alone could guide to security—he persisted in treading, though with faltering, irresolute steps, that which must inevitably lead astray.

Meanwhile, this irresolution—his efforts to conceal the passion he would not master—to resist temptations to which he ought never to have exposed himself—his torments—his emotions—his internal struggles—his despair—

acted fatally on the imagination of his victim; the effect he would once have deprecated ensued: Iñez began to watch with pity—with interest – with tenderness — the alternation of feelings which never took a form that could offend her.

Harry was far away; pursuing his arduous profession on the stormy ocean. Week after week elapsed—and no letter, no tidings, reminded her of the absent wanderer; or diverted her attention from the agonies of him, adoring and dying at her feet.

To separate from Laurence, was a species of cruelty she never once thought of. Ignorant of life—its snares, its dangers; heedless and confident in herself, she never surmised the possibility of her own frailty, or that evil could lurk where the high-souled, gifted Laurence was concerned. She was imprudent, unreflecting, unschooled, compassionate, and generous—He, the slave of a passion the more intense, as it was the very first that ever had mastered him.

Shall we follow step by step the advances of guilt? Shall we disclose the vain delusions, the false reasonings, with which the mind disguises to itself its own turpitude? Shall we betray all the miserable weakness of human nature under temptation? Suffice it to say — the consequences were such as those who dare to walk in forbidden paths, relying on their own strength, ought to anticipate. . . . . .

Her grief, her anguish, her self-reproaches, her despair, mock description; yet, like the poor bird, fascinated by the bright, glittering eye of the serpent, where did she fly for support, for consolation, but to him who had so cruelly betrayed her trust?—to him whom she had so long regarded as all that was wise and right—to him, the image of virtue in her mind? Her very guilt—the strange and false position in which the innocent find themselves placed by their first crime, formed a tie to bind her

more closely to her deceiver. She seemed to exist—to breathe—but in that presence which had been her destruction.

Oh! that we had the pen of the great master of human passion—that like him, it were given to us with some few faithful touches to pourtray the real horrors of guilt—the fall from innocence to vice.—To paint that dark cloud, which settles over the bright temple of the thoughts—the miserable weight hanging on the heart—the feverish, hasty joy—the bitter self-loathing revulsion—the disorder of the ideas—the diseased and corrupted affections—all the harmony of life turned to foul discord,

"Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh"—

and worse—the meannesses, and the basenesses, and the subterfuges which, linked in fatal consequence, drearily wait upon crime. Truth, and purity, and self-esteem, and honest dignity, and generous regard for others, and that sweet assurance of a living God, testified

by the whispers of conscience—exchanged for confusion, and selfishness, and fear! Such a picture, had we but the power to paint it, would scare the soul from the very first suspicion of wrong—would strip the flattering veil from guilty excitement—rob passion of its flatteries—pleasure of her delusions—investing purity, and rectitude, and fidelity, and honour, with their own bright and unparalleled attractions.

Alas! for the unfortunate Iñez! She was formed to taste, in its full extent, the bitterness of the exchange she had made. She awakened as it were from a dream—an illusion—a delirium—to an anguish, the more touching, as it was unmingled with one word of reproach to her seducer. Often, in the dead of the night, did she leave her sleepless pillow, driven by tumultuous thoughts, those relentless furies, and pacing her room, seek vainly for refuge—for relief, from her distraction. After a night of sleepless despair, would she wait, divided

between hope and remorse, till he came—till that step was heard upon the stairs—till he entered, unaccompanied, that fatal drawing-room—till, like a child on its mother's bosom, her forehead bent upon his arm, she would sob, and weep herself to rest.

The effect produced upon Laurence by this intense—this agonizing sensibility—this child-like confidence—this artless, though guilty, attachment, baffles the power of words. The common expressions of idolatry, of adoration, words, rendered vulgar by their application to transient and capricious feelings, are utterly insufficient here. Enough to say, his whole soul was absorbed by her. For once, the usual consequence of success did not ensue—satiety—indifference—contempt;—those bitter precursors of still bitterer retribution. Let it not be deemed an immoral softening of the picture to acknowledge, that, for once, though woman was frail, man was not ungrateful—and Iñez escaped a consequence which would

have terminated the tragedy by breaking her heart.

But let no woman flatter herself that such poor exemption may be her own fate. Iñez fell—but as the victim of no selfish vanity—no secret corruption. She fell, and angels might have wept her ruin. Laurence felt and knew this, and he doated upon his victim to an excess with which even his former feelings could not be compared. To devote every hour of his existence to her—to soothe—to console—to make himself the veriest slave that ever trod the earth, cost this man, once so proud in his independence, nothing: he lived but for her, and in her. He had not a view, not a wish, not an idea, that centered not in her; he had no time for remorse—no moment for self-reproach; she was his—it was enough; and could he once have reconciled her to herself—or could . . .—Would the winds and the waves restore the virtue, the peace of mind that was lost? Would the elements, the servants of

nature, interfere to protect the victims of her powers? He dared not form a wish—he dared not whisper the dark, the guilty hope, even to his inmost heart; but how did that spoiler's heart beat, when the image of Iñez—his Iñez, released from other ties, restored to herself—his, by all the laws of society—his, beyond the power of fate—his, *for ever*—crossed his mind. Cain! Cain!

CHAPTER XII.

Captain Vivian did not return. No letter—no sign of existence, reminded Iñez that he lived. Time rolled on—and still the husband was silent.

Miss Vivian had been absent the first unhappy week which completed the downfall of Iñez. She had remained long enough away for the guilty pair to recover from the first violent excitement of their new situation. The arguments—the soothing cares—of Laurence had, before her return, produced their effect on the plastic mind of Iñez—She began to yield

to those sophistries, which every man knows how to make use of on such an occasion: and who, better than Laurence? whose ideas of morals were all vague and undefined—and who had been a too willing disciple of that school, which prefers pleasure, liberty, taste, and refinement, to severe virtue and rigid right.

He intended not to corrupt—but was it likely that, imbued with principles such as his, he should not use arguments, convincing to himself, to blind that clear searching eye of rectitude, which still too plainly estimated the evil in its full enormity?

Iñez, gradually lulled by those opiates of the conscience—those slow poisons of the soul—sunk into a state, which, though it could not be said to be happy, might be called, in comparison, easy—and it was now only at intervals that the sharp poniard of recollection would stab her to the heart—when her children—her blooming, innocent children—when little Georgy, with her fair hair, the image of her

father—threw her chubby, infantine arms round her neck, covering her with sweet kisses—then would she press the child wildly to her bosom —set her rapidly down—sink on her knees before a chair—and, burying her face within her arms—and her arms in all the wild superfluity of her air, cry as if her heart were breaking.

Miss Vivian was slow of perception, though reputed a remarkably clever woman — Like other characters of her frigid class, she had little sympathy with, and very little knowledge of, what passed in the bosoms of others. As Laurence was rather more cautious in timing his visits than he had been before her departure—those little vague suspicions, which had played about her mind, that Mr. Hervey came too much to the house, were allayed; she marked not the hesitating start, the rising colour, the shaking hand of Iñez, as one brief knock struck on the house door—she marked not those eyes bent to the ground, as Laurence entered—that averted face, as he took her hand.

Laurence had always some good reason for coming—now a book—now a picture—now a piece of music—now a lesson to the little Florence—for with, what might seem, a strange inconsistency, he seemed to endeavour to atone to the child for the injury he had done, by devoting himself to her improvement in the most sedulous manner—he, who had hated exertion of every sort, now patiently pursued the wearying task of instruction, with a gentleness and perseverance that ensured the rapid advance of his pupil, while it engaged all her childish affections—The little ones were for ever on his knees, fondling him as if he had been their father.

"Really, Mr. Hervey," said Miss Vivian, one day, when Mrs. Vivian was out of the room; "you quite surprise me, by the pains you take with that dear child—You are quite a singularity—you who used to hate trouble so heartily. I am sure, Captain Vivian is very much obliged to you."

The blood did then mount to the temples of Laurence, as he bent over the little girl's exercise—He affected not to hear.

"I say, Mr. Hervey—that Captain Vivian is under great obligations to you—I am sure—for that child, what, between Harry's negligence, and Mrs. Vivian's weak indulgence, was on the very point of being utterly ruined. But is it not strange that we hear nothing of him?—I called at the Admiralty as I came this morning. No dispatches. Pray heaven, he may be safe." Laurence still kept his head bent to the little hand he was directing.

"I must own, I think Mrs. Vivian looks very anxious; though she never says a word to *me* on the subject. She strikes me as looking worried and nervous; but she is so reserved, I can make nothing of her."

"It is natural that she should be anxious," at length articulated Laurence."

"She is certainly a very charming young

lady," continued Miss Vivian," yet I used to think Harry might have done better."

"Why so?" said Laurence hastily.

"My heart long misgave me about that marriage. The first time I saw Miss Thornhaugh, there was something airy, and flighty, and fanciful about her manner, I did not quite like. I think indeed you said something of the kind yourself; but I own my opinion is changed—I think she is devoted to him now—indeed, I never saw a happier couple, except that he was hardly the *husband* enough—you understand me—a *little* too indulgent; but she evidently frets about him. I only wish she were a little less reserved. That hidden anxiety is a slow poison, Mr. Hervey."

Laurence started, for Iñez entered the room. He gazed to see what ravages that slow poison had already made in the form he idolized; but, except the languor of a melancholy softness, he saw no trace of poison there.

The next day was Sunday.

"Have you ordered your carriage, my dear?" said Miss Vivian. "In that case I will beg a seat. My horses don't come out of a Sunday, you know."

"I am not going to church," said Iñez, in a low tone.

"Why not, my dear? it is a beautiful day —Excuse me, Mrs. Vivian—but such duties—I am an old-fashioned woman—such duties had better not be neglected. I hope, Mr. Laurence," turning to him, "you are not putting any of your notions into Mrs. Vivian's head. I *never* knew her neglect church before. If your carriage is not ordered, let us walk."

"Will you not go to church? said Laurence, in a low tone. "You had better."

"No," said Iñez.

"Very strange," said Miss Vivian, rising to prepare herself. "I am afraid you cannot be well."

"I am not well," said Iñez, with forced composure.

"What is the matter? said Miss Vivian, now hastily returning. "Oh, my dear Mrs. Vivian, I have thought you not looking well ever since my return. Do send for Dr. L——. What is the matter?"

"Nothing—nothing! only I don't wish to go out to-day."

"I am sorry," said the other lady, again in a tone of reproof, "that you don't choose to go to church—where, I think, once a day at least—"

"Indeed," said Laurence, "I am no great advocate for these things; but, if you are pretty well, Mrs. Vivian, had you not better go?"

He was always in an agony for her reputation; and on the watch to guard it from the breath of suspicion.

"Do *you* bid me go?" said Iñez, with a look of melancholy reproach.

"And why should he not?" interrupted Miss Vivian. "I am sure it gives *me* great pleasure to hear you, Laurence, for once advocating such things. I trust yet to see you alter your opinion upon some points—Indeed, I think you improved, since I knew you. I little thought to hear you persuading Mrs. Vivian to her religious duties."

It will be perceived that Miss Vivian was one who did not dislike to exercise the office of censor, in her domestic circle, and who exercised it without any extraordinary delicacy.

"I am glad you think me improved in any way," said Laurence "Do go, Iñez," in a very low tone, as Miss Vivian left the room. "Do go, Iñez."

"Go!—Can *you* ask me?"

"Yes, my beloved Iñez—Miss Vivian—she will be surprised."

"Don't think, Mr. Hervey," hastily, "that if I stay at home you stay—but not, even to fly from you, will I pollute the house of God—

Almighty God!—*Father*—no more!" lifting up her arms, in an attitude of adoration. "Not yet so utterly a wretch am I become—I will not blaspheme before thy holy altar—I will not double dye my soul in guilt by black hypocrisy. No, Laurence—God—heaven—all that is pure and good, I have forsaken for you—for your sake—Be content. Ask me not to do a thing so abhorrent. The house of God I enter no more.

"My Iñez," said Laurence, deeply affected, "my Iñez—forgive me—forgive me! Oh, when, when shall I be like thee!—thou angel!—When will my gross—base—wretched nature rise to thine! Yet, believe it not—The God of nature . . . ."

"Stop, Laurence—blaspheme not—Because we are sinners, let us not darken the light of our own souls. *He* sees me—he sees me as I am. He sees that, prostrate in the dust—imploring his mercy—I cannot—I cannot tear thee from my heart—he sees that I am *thine*—not his—

that perdition—with thee—alas! alas!—But I will not mock the God I have forsaken."

When Laurence now and then heard words such as these, and saw the deep impression which, in spite of all his efforts, was made upon her mind, a dark anticipation of future retribution would suddenly come over him,—a pain short, yet so acute, would oppress him, that he would become deadly pale in an instant. Then Iñez forgot herself,—her remorse—and was again all softness—all tender anxiety. Every thing was forgotten, while she strove to soothe an anguish, so little in proportion with her own—but such is woman.

Iñez adhered to her resolution, and joined in religious services no more. "Sinning," says one who knew well what he was about, "will make us leave off praying, or praying will make us leave off sinning." Having once confessed that her lover was dearer to her than her Creator—having once owned the infatuation which would have made her insensible to the

call even of one risen from the dead—Iñez not only refused to mingle in public prayer—she ceased to pray in private. How dare she, more and more wedded to her sin—more obstinately devoted day by day to her guilty passion—how dared she pray, for mercies she refused to earn —for the Holy Spirit which she had grieved—for the salvation she had rejected! Every day took something from the sharpness of her remorse—something from the purity of her mind —as, at length deadened by habit, her better thoughts were laid in fatal slumber; and Iñez began to feel that careless indifference—that reckless insensibility to wrong, creep over her. Fatal refuge from the intense, but healing, agonies which she had experienced.

Men are not nice discriminators of the delicate shades by which the female mind becomes gradually darkened and depraved; and Laurence, who would have mourned the degradation in tears of blood, had he been aware of it, saw only a fresh proof of her devotion in the

smiles which, though faintly and rarely, began to illumine her countenance. Every change, indeed, only added fuel to his passion. He had loved her penitence and her tears—he loved her composure and her smiles yet more.

So passed the time. Iñez became more a companion for Miss Vivian than she had hitherto been; for as every moment of Laurence's absence was insupportably irksome, she endeavoured to beguile the time by interesting herself in Miss Vivian's charitable pursuits—she was led, too, by that very common feeling, that very common error, of endeavouring, by the scrupulous and almost excessive discharge of one duty, to make amends for the persevering breach of another.

She would fain have made atonement for her guilt by any sacrifice but *one*—that *one*—the cherished sin—that was beyond her strength—but any other thing that it might please heaven to require. So, she too, attended

meetings, and subscribed, and visited, and was busy and stirring—and did good, as she hoped —and Miss Vivian began to grow quite fond of her: for she was not insensible to the vanity of carrying such a coadjutor along with her; and when Iñez had lavished her guineas, and been received with gratitude by the poor and wretched she had helped to raise, she returned to sit by the accustomed *fauteuil*, with something almost like her early cheerfulness, and Laurence resumed his books, and the whole house recovered a certain air of domestic comfort.

Miss Vivian, flattered and in good humour, was now ever ready to make one in various little excursions proposed by Laurence into the neighbourhood of London:—the summer was now pretty far advanced, the weather charming; and, with a view of dissipating thought and indulging the refined luxury of enjoying fine scenery and a summer's sky under the enchantment of an adored society, he was every day proposing some new scheme or other, which his

delightful powers of conversation rendered but too attractive to Iñez.

It was the end of August—a glorious morning gave promise of a day of unusual heat. Laurence came to breakfast, and proposed to the two ladies an excursion up the river to Richmond: to go by water, and let the carriages meet them by land, as he feared Mrs. Vivian might be wearied by the double passage. She looked wearied already, as if she had passed a restless night, and his eyes followed her anxiously, to ask her what was the matter? A look of melancholy sweetness was the only answer, and a sigh—which touched him the more, because it was evidently suppressed.

"It will refresh you—the sweet breeze on the water," said Laurence. "I have been out already. It is delicious. Let us take the children."

"Ay, let us take the children, nurse," said Iñez. "Give me a load of shawls—You may

trust them with us. We will not let them get into mischief. Will you go, sweet little ones?"

The little things were delighted.

"Florence shall be mamma's share to-day," said Hervey, "and I will take you, naughty little Georgy—for else, you will jump out of the boat."

"Very well, Mr. Laurence," said Georgy, "I shall be so naughty you won't know what to do with me."

"And I'll be so good," whispered the gentle Florence, "if I may be your child, mamma."

"Will you," stooping down, and kissing her, while a tear was in her eye, "*always* be good?"

"Always good—*so* good—as good as you!"

Mrs. Vivian hastily walked to the window."

"I do wonder when papa will come home," said Georgy, heaving a great sigh. "He used always to take us on the water."

"Hush, my dear," whispered Miss Vivian, hastily. "It makes mamma unhappy—Don't speak of him, my dear."

"Does it make *you* unhappy too, Mr. Laurence?—What is mamma crying for?—I do wish he were at home."

"And so do I," whispered Florence.

"Very right of you, my dears—You ought to wish for him—but don't talk of him just now."

Laurence, while Miss Vivian said this, had put the child very coldly on the ground—and, taking up the newspaper, began to read it busily.

Breakfast was soon over, and they went down to the boat—Laurence had provided an excellent one. He seemed resolved to enjoy this day with all the refinements of pleasure—The white awning softened the rays of the sun—and the size of the boat allowed of a cushioned and luxurious seat—while the glittering waters, the soft wafting breeze, the coolness, the tranquillity, filled the soul with delicious languor. Miss Vivian sat at the end of the boat—Iñez by her side—Laurence and

the two children lay at her feet—He had a book, and, from time to time, read from it some of those impassioned verses, of which, alas! she had been too fond.—Miss Vivian understood no Italian.

Iñez on this day yielded, perhaps for the first time, without remorse, to the seductive enjoyment of the moment.—Her eyes were bent downwards—but he could read them—he could read her smile.—That day was the first in which, unreproved, they had seemed to taste that felicity which love promises.—For those few hours, he might be said to keep his faith—But they shall not be described here—nor the walk in Richmond Park, where, hanging upon his arm—Miss Vivian on the other—she wandered through the shades—nor the return home in a sweet, clear evening—the birds making the groves and hedges vocal.

It was agreed that Laurence should be dropped in Pall-Mall—go to his own lodging,

where he was to dress, and return to dine with the ladies.—It was about five o'clock when the carriage stopped in Spring Gardens —Iñez hurried up stairs—The guilty intoxication was complete—she had no thought but of the dinner—and, having hastily consigned the children to the nurse, hurried up stairs to choose the pure white she knew he loved, and adorn herself to please *those eyes*.—She was impatient to dress to meet again.

She ran to her dressing-table.

A letter lay there.

She snatched it desperately up—tore it open —and read:

Portsmouth.

My beloved Inez,

I leave to newspapers the task of communicating the result of our harassing expedition, content to thank God that I am landed alive, to fly to your arms, and bury in your bosom all my cares—all my troubles—I shall leave this, as soon as possible, and be with you all, my darlings, at eight this evening.

HARRY VIVIAN.

Kiss our children ten thousand times over for me.

The heart of Iñez suddenly stopped—and she became not pale, but of a cold blue clay colour.—She did not fall.—She stood rooted to the spot, like one on whom the curse of God had suddenly fallen.—One instant—one single instant, had sufficed to open her eyes.—It was as if scales had fallen from before them.—She saw herself as she was—the guilt—the inexcusable infatuation—the pollution—the degradation.—As the picture of former happiness, love, and innocence, rose suddenly to her fancy, with all the brightness of the clearest perception; as her husband—wronged, insulted, betrayed—stood, as it were, in all the honesty of his devoted affection—his cheerful tenderness—his generous confidence, living before her eyes.—She said nothing—she laid the letter open upon the table.—Her hat was yet on—she wrapped herself in a large cloak—and slid softly down stairs.

"I am come!"—said she, as she opened the door of the room in the Albany, where Laurence, ready dressed to go out, was sitting: "I am come!—to claim my place at last!—I am come, a guilty, degraded, blasted being—to claim my place by your fireside."

"Good God, Iñez! what is the matter?" cried he, struck by the hollow tones of her voice—still more by the spectral hue of her countenance. "My Iñez, what is it?"

"*Your* Iñez?—yes, indeed!—My husband is come home."

"Vivian!"

"He is come!—yes!"—flinging herself prostrate on the floor, while her long black hair fell over her to her very feet, as she lay like a crushed worm—contracted together, as though she would bury her forehead in the earth. "Yes! he is come home.—By this time he is come!—He has found his trust betrayed!—His hearth defiled!—His faith—his heart, broken! —Yes! he is come—his children are in his arms

—their tears are on his cheek—their hands are in his neck—they are all calling for the *mother!*"

And, at these words, such a tempest of groans, and sobs, and tears, rushed forth, that Laurence thought she would have been suffocated.

He fell on the floor by her side—but she pushed him from her—rude—violent—for the first and only time. "Touch me not, Laurence—pollute not my first honest tears.—Serpent—mingle not your insidious poison with my groans.—Oh, Harry! Harry!—receive me back once more—Take back your wife to your bosom!—Forgive me, Harry!—forgive me, Harry!—I have been mad—but I am mad no longer—It was a dream—it was all a horrid, wicked dream—nothing but a dream.—Why am I not at home?" starting suddenly up. "What am I about?—Why am I not at home?—Mr. Hervey, do take me home.—He is coming, where am *I?*"——

"Will you go home, my dear Mrs. Vivian?"

said Laurence, repressing with a violent effort his own emotions. "Will you go home? Indeed you had better—Let me call a coach."

But the transient delirium was already over. "You would take me *home*, then," with a look of withering contempt. "You would take the empty casket back to your friend—Offer him the worthless, withered rose, that you have rifled—A fit present for an honourable man.—You would take me *home?*"

"Alas, Iñez! what is it you say?—I would do any thing, every thing—I would die at your feet—I would endure every torture that the ingenuity of barbarity could devise—I would be torn to pieces—only, my Iñez, to serve you—and to help you."

"Would you, Laurence?—I know you would—Forgive me—I spoke in my agony—I never intended to reproach you—Forgive me!"

Laurence burst into tears.

"That is right. Yes, let us sit down in the dust and weep.—Yes, let us fall down on the

earth—let him trample us under his feet—Harry!—Harry!"

She sat down on the ground, and Laurence by her side: and there, like that guilty pair, who opened the gates of sin and death on this dark world,—sat those two creatures, formed for excellence and for light—cowering on the earth—their faces buried in their hands—weeping and groaning aloud.

CHAPTER XIII.

Eight o'clock was striking on St. Margaret's, as Captain Vivian's carriage and four dashed up Whitehall.—The horses seemed to participate in the impatience of the traveller. They turn sharply—They stop, foaming and smoking at the well known door—He flung open the carriage—ran up his steps, knocked with his own brief sharp knock. His heart was beating—his action hurried—his dress dusted and disordered by his rapid journey—heat and toil and weariness were in his aspect—his beautiful hair was matted about his temples.—The door opens.

"Well, John! how's all at home?"

And without waiting for an answer, or casting a look upon the servant, he sprang up stairs, and entered the drawing-room hastily.

"My Iñez!"

But no Iñez replied; the cold formal figure of Miss Vivian presented itself; with that solemn, gloomy air of woe—that dark funereal aspect, which, at the first glance, "foretels the nature of a tragic volume."

He was so struck with consternation that he almost fell, as stumbling forwards, he hastily exclaimed:

"My sister!"

Your *sister*, Harry," said she, in grave accents.

"And Iñez,"—glancing round the room with an eye of horror.—"And Iñez—Almighty God—tell me the worst at once!"

"She is not here."

"Tell me the worst," seizing both her hands and looking in her face. "What is it? your

countenance is dreadful—but your clothes;" glancing rapidly downwards, "I thank my God," with a loud cry, "she is not *dead!*"

Miss Vivian turned away her head—she wept.

"Tell me, sister—she is not dead—ill—very ill—dying!—any thing but dead!—Let me only see her—kiss her—hear her speak once more—I'll bear it all like a man.—Only say she is not dead."

"She is not dead," faltered Miss Vivian; "but, oh, brother, think of her no more."—all her virtuous severity returning to her bosom, and hardening even to the very tones of her voice. "You must think of her no more."

"What, in the name of God, do you mean? Think of her no more!—May heaven blast me when I forget her!"

"You must—you must."

"Must—must—must.—Speak out.—What horrible ideas do you mean me to entertain? Is she mad? Is she lost? In the name of

every thing in heaven—and in *hell*—speak out, speak out."

"Oh, Harry! Harry!"

"Mad!—is she mad?"

"Mad—alas, mad indeed!—infatuated, lost!—Harry, she has left you—left this house—she is no longer yours—she is gone—she is dishonoured—she is another's." There was time for no more.—Captain Vivian uttered a sharp cry—sprang from the earth as if a musket shot had entered his heart—and fell down senseless upon the floor.

At six o'clock, when dinner had been served, a vain search had been made for Mrs. Vivian—She was not in her own room.—She was sought in the nursery—in every corner of the house—in vain. The open letter which lay upon her dressing-table was at length brought into the drawing-room, by nurse, a grave, respectable woman, between forty and fifty.

"Where can your mistress be, nurse?"

"Madam, this letter was lying open upon the dressing-table."

"Good heavens!" looking at the letter, "my brother will be here in two hours.—Where can she be gone to?"—Did she say she was going out?—and not to know.—She is gone out to the Sullivans I dare say—and Harry will be back.—How provoking that she did not get the letter!"

"Madam—she did get the letter—it is *open*," said nurse expressively.

"It is impossible.—How could she leave the house? She cannot be so wild as to be gone to meet him."

"Not to *meet* him," said the nurse with emphasis.

"Nurse," said Miss Vivian—now for the first time looking up, and perceiving in the servant's face a look which said, *question* me. "Nurse—do you know where your mistress is?"

"I can't pretend to say, madam—but I fear —Oh, Miss Vivian"—and the poor woman,

turning away, covered her face with her apron —"I am not fit to be put upon to tell you, ma'am, but we have all had our suspicions some time.—It is not fit for such as us to judge our betters—but servants are not stocks and stones.—We must see—we cannot help seeing—oh! if it had pleased the Almighty, first to darken my eyes."

"Good heavens," said Miss Vivian, shaking from head to foot, "what do you mean?"

"Mr. Hervey—ma'am—he came too much to this house."—Miss Vivian was frigid—but she was not, as poor nurse said, a stock or a stone. She turned very sick at this, and fell into a chair, almost fainting.—At last she articulated:

"Take care what you say."

"Ah, madam," said nurse, the tears rolling fast down her cheeks, "such a sweet young lady!—and my poor—poor master."

"Sweet young lady!" with indignation—"such an abominable wretch—such a cold-

blooded—vile hypocrite—Your poor master!—poor, indeed!—but tell me what you suspect." Nurse then, in broken accents, told her story—that oft repeated tale of domestic guilt, which, concealed from every other eye, is detected by those important, though secondary personages in the human drama, who, standing somewhat aloof from the game their superiors are playing—discern its bearings and its progress with so just a penetration!

"And we are afraid, madam," she added, sobbing, "that my master's return it is, has driven my mistress from her blessed home—Poor creature!—poor creature!"

"Where to?"

"To the Albany—to Mr. Hervey's, John supposes—but he said he would step and see, to make sure—for, good Lord Almighty! if we wrong her!"

"God grant it!"

At this moment John entered the room—He looked pale—he was out of breath—"*She*

is there," was all he said—and hastily shutting the door, he ran down stairs, and, locking himself into his pantry, cried as if his heart would break.

Far were these honest servants from shewing the malignant, envious triumph of inferiors in their mistress's fall.—Though their servile situation—though their too often base acquaintances—though their innumerable temptations have a tendency morally to degrade this class of society, beyond any other removed from the most abject want—yet, in worthy and honourable families, servants will be found to be generous in their feelings, and with a certain dignity of behaviour which becomes them well.

The servants of Harry and his Iñez had seen nothing in their superiors, before the last fatal weeks, but uprightness, sincerity, truth and honour;—had experienced nothing but gentle restraint and unvarying kindness—They doted on their master and mistress, and took each a dependant's honest pride in their

graces, their charms and their virtues.—They had deplored unfeignedly the errors they suspected—and, with something of the coarseness of their rank, had most fervently hoped they would never be found out—and even now, the aim of the good nurse—her last hope was, that scandal might be avoided, and Mrs. Vivian recovered before her husband should return.

"You see how it is, ma'am," said she. "She *is* there: but if you would please to let me call a coach, and just put yourself and little darling Miss Georgy in, I think she would hear reason and come back, may be—and all would be well again."

"Hear reason!—and all be well again!" said Miss Vivian; the coldness of injured pride now overpowering all softer emotions. "No, nurse—she has chosen to leave my brother's roof—Where she has taken refuge, there let her remain—I, at least, will not enhance his dishonour, by endeavouring to conceal it from him."

"Yet, madam." . . . . .

"Not a word more—You may leave the room now. Take care the children do not come down, till I have seen my brother first alone:" and she seated herself in dignified silence, to await his coming.

Long was it before the injured husband recovered to a sense of his miseries. Long, like one dead, did he lie stretched on the sofa, while his faithful servants, their eyes streaming with tears, endeavoured vainly to recal him to life. Nurse held his pale head, bathing his temples: the man-servant chafed his hands—Miss Vivian stood by, gazing like one half stupid, half vexed. The very excess of his grief irritated her—She thought it a tribute too great to be paid to the fallen Iñez.

At last he opened his eyes with a glazed, staring look, and fixed them on the swollen countenance of nurse:

"Nurse, where's your mistress?"

"Oh, sir! oh, my poor dear master!"

"Where's your mistress?—where's my Iñez —my own—my Inez?—my . . . . ."

"Nay, brother," said Miss Vivian, coming forwards, "not before them all—Nurse, you may go—John, I'll ring—your master is better now."

The compassionate servants left the room.

"My brother, disgrace yourself not before your servants. Indignation is the only sentiment worthy of a man of sense and virtue, in such a crisis—She is beneath your regrets—You must forget her—forget her very existence—She is a vile, degraded" . . . .

"Hold, for God's sake, Miss Vivian," cried her brother, for the torture of such words was insupportable. "I shall bear my affliction, I trust, like a man; but don't abuse her—don't blame her—don't—don't, my dear Isabella," and he covered his face with his hands.

Miss Vivian stood cold and silent by. Characters of her stamp never know what to do when feelings burst those conventional bounds of ordinary propriety, in which their own are

content for ever to dwell. The poignant grief of Captain Vivian excited her surprise and anger. That he ought to be entirely absorbed in indignation and contempt—that he ought to dismiss such a wanton from his heart and thoughts at once—and never suffer himself to regret her—was reason enough with her for expecting that he would; and when she found that he did not, but that his anguish at his loss mocked consolation, she found herself quite at fault. All the common-places of consolation, she felt instinctively, would be of no use here—and she knew of no other—while he felt wounded by her manner, and almost irritated by her presence.

At length, after several efforts, he began to put questions, with a sort of desperate hope that he might discover some reason to think that Miss Vivian had been deceived. She answered in that dry clear manner, which, while it left no doubt upon his mind, drove him almost to distraction.

"And who?" at length he said; "you have not named him yet—Who has robbed me of my treasure?"

"Who but one?—but the man you so imprudently trusted—that accomplished French philosopher and sceptic—Mr. Hervey"——

"Mr. who?"

"Laurence Hervey."

"God in heaven!" He had not fainted this time, though he fell back, and as she stepped forward to assist him, he motioned her away. —"Thank you, sister; I think I shall be better left to myself a little. Will you go to the nursery, and, when I ring, tell nurse to bring my—my—children. Don't come yourself—let me see them alone. Don't be displeased, dear Isabella — don't be angry" — as she walked rather coldly out of the room—chilled by that barbarous self-love, which, in the awful presence of extreme misery, can still be personal —full of the virtue of its own attentions—offended when they are not acknowledged with

gratitude—and expecting consideration and respect amid the rackings of agony. "Don't be angry with me"—How humble, how gentle is extreme sorrow!

In ten minutes the drawing-room bell rang; the door opened—nurse put the children into the room, and instantly retired, leaving them alone with their father.

"Papa!—papa!—dear, sweet papa! are you come home?"

"My little ones!—my little ones!"

Their arms were round his neck. "Where's mamma?—where's mamma?" cried the youngest—"She wants you so—where's mamma?"

"My child—my child—don't—don't. She's gone—she's gone for ever. Oh God!"—and clasping his children to his bosom, tears at last gushed forth, wetting their little innocent bosoms, while they loaded him with their affectionate caresses.

"Don't cry—she'll come back—she's only just gone—she'll come back, I am sure," said

the little one, endeavouring to console him, in her usual busy way.

But Florence buried her face in her father's breast, and her tears mingled fast and silently with his; while her beautiful hair fell over the arm, which pressed her to his aching heart.

It was past nine o'clock before Captain Vivian had recovered sufficient composure to reflect upon his situation. The children having left him, he remained alone, and his steps might be heard, with melancholy cadence, pacing his deserted drawing-rooms — those apartments which had been to him as the shrine of a divinity, and as the temple of happiness, the abode of perennial, never-fading joy, now dark and solitary,—the walls, once brilliant with the abundant evening lights, and echoing to the cheerful prattle of his lovely wife and joyous children, now silent and gloomily overshadowed by the closing evening, which fell ominous, heavy and cloudy, after

the bright splendours of the preceding day. Large masses of shade lay on the walls, as twilight gradually deepened into night, wrapping that scene of former joy in silent gloom. But Captain Vivian called for no lights. The uncertain gleams from the lamps, as successively lighting, they shed their twinkling fires—or the flash from some rapidly-passing carriage, fell upon that figure traversing the gloom, with folded arms and head bent upon the breast, the very image of despondency.

He was reflecting upon what he ought to do. In the excess of his grief, there was scarcely a place left for indignation. Genuine sorrow is a gentle, a humble feeling.

Harry Vivian had in secret always cherished that sense of his own want of merit, which attends upon the most refined and feeling minds —a mark, at once, of the purity and of the delicate perceptions of a taste, too refined to acquiesce in those imperfections which attend upon all, but which most are too gross, or too

vain, to perceive in themselves. He felt no wounded pride, no exasperating sense of ill usage. He was utterly absorbed in grief over the ruin of so much innocence and happiness. Yet, with the feelings habitual to him as a gentleman and a military man, almost the first defined idea that presented itself, after the first paroxysm of grief had subsided, was that of demanding such satisfaction as the code of honour requires for injuries of this nature; and to call Laurence to an account, appeared to him but as the natural, inevitable consequence of what had been done—a consequence to which it was not necessary that he should be led by any extraordinary feeling of rage or indignation.

The treachery of Laurence, in truth, excited but slight emotion in his mind. Had he loved him as he once had done, no doubt there would have been more violence of exasperation in his sensations; but it must be confessed, that the devoted passion inspired by Iñez, had,

in some measure, weakened the force of earlier attachments.

At length the drawing-room bell was heard to ring through that house of mourning, where all had been, for some time, silent as death.

" Bring me a candle," said Captain Vivian, as the door opened, " and, John, go and find out where Captain Sullivan is—You will learn at the Admiral's. Ask him to come to me—Tell him I could not write," putting his hand to his head, and clearing from his brow and jaded countenance that hair which once blew so lightly round it, and which already hung in the dingy faded masses of sickness and neglect.

The servant soon returned with a candle, as his master had desired; and putting it on the table, where its faint glimmers served only to enhance the lonely melancholy of the apartment, departed on his mission.

Captain Vivian glanced once round, and

then, with a deep sigh, sat down to write. What he had to do was soon finished. He folded his letter without reading it over; and, with a slight shudder, wrote the Address—

"Laurence Hervey, Esquire."

This was just done when the light step of Captain Sullivan was heard on the stair.—He hastily opened the door. This was no moment for conventional greetings. Vivian rose to meet him—the friends were in each other's arms.

"My dear fellow," was all that Sullivan could say; for his heart was too full for words.

Vivian pressed his hand without speaking, and sat down to recover himself. At length—

"You know what has happened?"

"I do."

"And why I sent for you to-night?"

"I suppose so."

"I am very unfit to act for myself, Sullivan," passing his hand languidly across his

eyes; you will arrange things for me—time —place — it is all indifferent to me — The sooner the better, that is all. Will you go there to-night?"

" Most certainly I will—(the damned scoundrel,)" aside—" Have you written?"

" Yes, here it is—Will you take it, or send it?"

" I'll call with it, and send it up; so think no more about *that*—I'll settle it all for you. But, Vivian—Good God, how ill you look! You had better go to bed and rest yourself for a few hours—Indeed you had better before morning."

" No, I would rather be here," pressing his hand again upon his forehead—" I shall recover in a few hours. The shock," and his manly lips trembled—" the shock has been great, Sullivan; but I shall be more composed by and bye, when all this is done. It will be a relief.—Will you go then?"

"Yes, directly—but can I do nothing more for you first?"

"No—come back as soon as you can, my good fellow."

Captain Sullivan was gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

The servant opened the door of the room where Laurence and Iñez were still sitting, in that sort of stupid disconsolate gloom which succeeds to passionate anguish, exhausted, but not relieved by its own vehemence.

"Here is a note, sir, for you—and a gentleman waits."

Laurence took it: but when the address met his eye, he became very pale—the colour fled even from his lips—an universal shiver ran through his frame—his hands trembled—he could scarcely open the letter.

Iñez saw his emotion and guessed its cause, and rising hastily from her chair she crossed the room — grasped the quivering hands of Laurence earnestly in hers — fixing her eyes wildly on his face—

" You will never meet him," she said in a shrill and ghastly tone—" You will not—you dare not—You cannot come to me covered with his blood—with Harry's blood—I am not like that wicked woman you once told me of, am I? will you come to me covered with his blood?"

" My Iñez, what is it you say?—his blood!" shuddering.

" No, no, you will not meet him—You will not—you could not—you dare not—say you will not—say you will not."

" Alas! my Iñez—you know I *must.*

" Must! Good heavens—" casting his hands suddenly away—" You will dare to look him in the face?—you will dare to point a pistol at his heart? that heart!—monster—"

" Oh, Iñez, some pity even for me! Some

pity for a wretch, a lost, damned, miserable wretch," cried Laurence, writhing with agony. "You do not think—you cannot think me such an accursed rascal—If you do!—Oh, Eternal Judge, strike me dead at her feet now! I am punished enough."

"Then you will not meet him—" again advancing eagerly, "You will not heap injury on injury. Tell me, you will not, Laurence."

"Laurence!.....I will not if you bid me not—I will be trampled upon—spit upon—shamed — disgraced — scouted — abhorred of men, as reprobate of God—I will do all you tell me—Yet, consider, Iñez—it is a satisfaction that I owe him—it is the last atonement I can make—He ought to have the poor amends of aiming at this miserable breast—but, may I perish eternally, if I could point at his—No, let me meet him—If he strike me, all the better for every one—I shall not return his fire—Could you, Iñez,—utterly as you despise me—could you for one moment believe that I would?"

She turned away, melted at this—"You are right, Laurence. I see you ought to go."

He went down stairs without saying more, and found Sullivan in the dining-room, waiting for him.

The cold, distant politeness—the icy ceremony—with which that young officer received him, did more to sink Laurence in his own opinion than all which had yet passed—though properly, more a man of science than a man of the world, and belonging to that division of society which dwells rather in the regions of speculation and philosophic enquiry, than of action and manly communication—he felt acutely the censure which the manner of the usually frank and thoughtless seaman conveyed. That he had offended the laws of morals, and had despised those of religion, might perhaps have sat lightly on them both—but he had betrayed confidence—he had outraged those rules of honour, by which men of honour are governed—and his eye quailed before that of one,

whom, a few weeks before, he would have considered his inferior in every respect.

It is common with moralists, to disparage this code of honour; perhaps without sufficient reflection. The law of honour is, after all, a noble rule of action—in that exact regard to obligations enforced by no other power, in that detestation of all that is mean, treacherous, and designing—and, in the generous contempt of life which it demands, it lays hold of, and cherishes some of the best principles of our nature; and it may be questioned whether the cold injunctions of what may be thought a more reasonable system, be so favourable to the growth of energetic and generous sentiment, as this wilder, and more heroic law.

Captain Sullivan drily and briefly explained the purport of his visit, and, expressing Captain Vivian's desire that the meeting might take place as soon as possible, proposed early in the morning of that day, now rapidly approaching, and asked Laurence to name some friend with

whom preliminaries might be arranged. Laurence mentioned a Mr. Trevor, to whom he instantly dispatched a note; and having, in a nervous, agitated manner, signified his acquiescence in Captain Vivian's desire of an early meeting, the gentlemen separated.

"A coward as well as a rascal," muttered Sullivan," to himself, as he left the Albany. But there he was mistaken. Laurence, though he wanted energy, was insensible to fear. It was the conscience within—that voice which, sooner or later, will make itself heard—which vanquished him.

CHAPTER XV.

When Captain Sullivan had departed, Laurence exhausted by all that had passed, remained in that state, vulgarly, but expressively, denoted by the term, more dead than alive. A kind of stupid insensibility had succeeded to that rapid succession of feelings so unusual to him. The sudden catastrophe — the rapidity with which all seemed hurrying to a conclusion— the confusion of various sensations—the shame, the remorse, the pity, and the love, which agitated him by turns—produced a hurry of

thought foreign to his usual habits of analysis and reflection. He did not return to the room where he had left Iñez; but remained in gloomy abstraction, awaiting the arrival of Mr. Trevor, who at last made his appearance.

Mr. Trevor was a tall dark man, with that sort of lengthened, grave countenance, which seems incapable of reflecting the expression of joy or pleasure: yet, though its character was severe and ascetic, it was neither harsh, nor stern: and, with no follies nor vices of his own to regret or to blush for, Trevor knew what it was to pity the infirmities of others. His connection with Laurence had been rather that of an intimate acquaintance than of a friend; for Laurence was, as is usual with refined and fastidious characters, slow in forming attachments, and perhaps he had never in his life loved, warmly, any friend, but Captain Vivian: he had applied to Trevor as the man he most esteemed amongst his intimates, and now received him without any of that embar-

rassing sense of disgrace, which had marked his meeting with Captain Sullivan.

We all feel that there is something in reflection and experience which, though it does not abate the detestation of sin, very considerably increases compassion for sinners. Those who know, and think, and observe much, find in their own hearts, and in the conduct of those around them, but too many reasons for pitying, as human frailties, the excesses of human passions—learning to regard the errors of their fellow-men with melancholy, rather than with anger; while, in the direct open abhorrence of more simple minds, the culpable seem to see some slight reflection of that purer eye—that eye too pure to behold evil—and tremble at the prospect of their own deformities.

Mr. Trevor, however, looked extremely grave, though kind, when he entered the room, and shook Laurence by the hand, with little of his usual cordiality.

"I relied upon your kindness," said Laurence, "and I applied to you, as the only man I know, who, while he condemns me as he ought, can still feel for my situation. This is no common case, to excite a smile on the face of a man of the world. My guilt has been great—I have betrayed confidence, double confidence—nor should I have asked you to go out with me, except as one desirous to make the only expiation in his power. You will, of course, conclude I mean to stand his fire, and not return it."

"I concluded so. Under the circumstances, I agree with you—it is the only thing to be done. Who is his second?

"Sullivan. Will you go to him?—And will you provide me with pistols—I am so little used to the sort of thing—I scarcely know whether I ever had a pistol in my hand since I left Harrow—I never was engaged in an affair of this kind, either as second or principal—I am ignorant of all the etiquette of

these matters—You will confer a very *serious*—I was going to say, *lasting*—" (with a faint laugh) " obligation, upon me, if you will instruct me, and arrange for me—so that the last act of a worthless and useless life, may at least not be disgraceful."

" Certainly.—Leave it all to me.—Will you have a surgeon?—and who?"

" No, it is not my wish when I fall, to have the dying embers of life excited to a momentary sensibility by professional tricks. The sooner all is over with me, the better—the better for me—the better for all."

" The better for *you!*" said Trevor very gravely, " Excuse me—you know I am what is called, a serious man—The better for *you!*—I perhaps exceed my province in trespassing on such matters; but you remember what the father of Hamlet laments as the most fearful circumstance of his sudden departure—" Unhouselled—unanointed—unannealed—and sent to his account . . . . . "

"Oh! as to that, I must take my chance."

Mr. Trevor shook his head. "It is an awful chance, Hervey—and permit me to wonder that a man of reflection like yourself can consider it so lightly."

"I have indeed," cried Laurence, with sudden energy of manner, "miserably wasted the existence that the unknown Power has bestowed. If I am an accountable being—a miserable account have I to render;—if there be a Judge—a wretched criminal must I appear at his bar. I have wasted intellect, in vain speculations;—I have dreamed away health, in indolent self-indulgence;—I have abused power for vicious purposes:—the only one I loved, I have ruined—those who loved and trusted me, I have betrayed. I have been more wily than the serpent—more cruel than the beast of prey—I have glided into the chamber of peace, to poison and to destroy—I have entered the fold of the lamb, to despoil and to devour. If there be a hell—it is peopled with

such as I am—If there be an evil spirit—I am his."

"Yet," said Mr. Trevor, shocked, though affected—"despair is twin brother with blasphemy. The Author of our being has held out the means—a sinner called even at the eleventh hour—repentance—the grace of his Spirit,—a change of the inner nature—confidence in a Redeemer—it is never too late."

"It is too soon with me," said Laurence. "I am not old enough—weak enough—doting enough, for all that. Such mystical dogmas are too high for me: if I am worthless, it will please, I presume, the Being who created me, to resume the existence that he gave; to restore me to that nothing whence I sprang.—If it please him to continue me in existence, his mercy is surely sufficient—I want none to mediate—I am what I am—No mystical washing can whiten me."

He spoke bitterly—and Mr. Trevor's coun-

tenance assumed more than its usual seriousness, tempered however with much gentleness, as he said: "I have been long convinced, both by reflection and observation, that these things are deep mysteries to a participation in which it pleases our Creator to call some, while from it he excludes others; else why should the same subject present itself under an aspect so totally different to men of equally sound minds, and abilities about upon a par? I thank God I am not of that despairing creed, which confines extension of mercy to extension of light. I believe there may be life, where there is darkness—I am sorry you cannot think as I do; but I have done. I will now go to Admiral Sullivan's—You will have something to do while I am away—Doubtless there are matters relative to your fortune that should not be neglected; there is an unfortunate person concerned, who may be dependent upon your forethought for a provision. I do not know how that may be—but it should be attended to

—You should also get a little sleep; for your looks are so haggard that, without some refreshment of that sort, I doubt whether you will be able to walk to your ground. I remember you at Rome—you were no Hercules."

"Thank you," said Laurence. "If I were to lie down, I should not sleep—I have done with that, I believe—unless I find it where I hope to find it. I will attend to your other suggestions. Strange that it should not have occurred to me before! but, really, the action of this tragedy is so crowded, it admits no time for thought. When will you be back?"

"At four, at latest—we must be early these fine mornings, to escape interruption. Order your carriage at half-past four—but I wish you would try a little rest."

"I shall have it by this time to-morrow.—Good night!"

Laurence employed himself in writing till nearly three o'clock; and the only gleam of consolation that soothed his spirit on that

dread evening was, while thus employed — while endeavouring to provide for the comfort of her whom he was about to leave; he felt a sweetness mingling with his sorrow. To act for her benefit—to care for—to provide for—to be still in some measure the protector of Iñez—carried with it a balm to his wounds. Having provided for her by his will; mentioning her in terms the most distant and respectful—he took, for the last time, pen and paper; and, in a farewell letter, poured forth, with that touching and simple eloquence of which he was so fatally the master, the last adieus of a heart, whose devotion exceeded all common powers of description. He exhausted every topic of encouragement and consolation, to reconcile her to an existence of which he himself was weary—to revive her hopes and energies, though himself the victim of hopeless despair. All that reason, tenderness—nay, sophistry, could urge, was exhausted, to reconcile to peace that heart, which he had set at so cruel variance with itself.

Having somewhat composed his thoughts by this occupation, his feelings took an unexpected turn; and he began to reflect for the first time, with remorse, and with a return of his former partial affection, on his injured friend. Harry, in all the ingenuous simplicity, the generous confidence, of his nature, rose before him; and tears gushed over the paper on which he confessed his injuries, and asked a late forgiveness—Those first honest tears of repentance and humility—the first which ever had fallen from his eyes, seemed to open the frozen springs of grace within his heart—Softened and humbled, the pride of reasoning intellect at length gave way; and, as Laurence called upon God to bless his friend, and compensate him for all the misery he himself had occasioned, he felt that there was a God—he trembled and he adored.

A calm now succeeded to the paroxysms of anguish. He rose to prepare for his departure, and, having arranged his dress, and placed

his hat and gloves ready; with that sort of slow deliberation with which we sometimes retard a moment ardently desired—he opened the door to take a last parting look at Iñez.

He stole slowly up stairs—All was still as death through the apartments—His servant had been long a-bed; and only the click of the time-piece, on the stairs, was to be heard through that strange silence of universal repose, which wraps the great Babylon at that hour—He opened the door very softly, hoping to find her asleep—he was not disappointed—Exhausted by suffering, and still retaining so much of her blissful infancy, as to find in sleep a refuge from acute distress;—the unhappy Iñez lay stretched upon a low couch that stood at the end of the room. Her cloak was wrapt in large folds round her form; but her hat had fallen on the ground beside her; and her dark raven hair fell, dishevelled and disordered, over her face and shoulders—Her

cheeks were pale, soiled, and blistered with her tears—her long eye-lashes, yet wet and matted—her arms, thrown in the negligent despondency of one who, having flung herself down in despair, has, weary with weeping, been surprised by slumber: and so had it been,—the idea of the duel had stupified the remaining senses of Iñez.

The first desperate agony with which the idea of her husband's danger had been contemplated, having yielded to the assurances of Laurence, of confused horror, had succeeded, as the thought of his own probable fate rose to her mind.—Death, pale and ghastly, mingled its shadows with her other cruel reflections—Yet, looking upon this as a sort of sacrifice and atonement for their mutual sin, she contemplated it rather with melancholy awe, than with bitterness—Her mind was in that state which seems to demand a victim as a compensation for a heavy crime; and her own misery, and the probable fate of her

deceiver, appeared to her, natural, just, and right.

Yet the weight of that sentence, against which she presumed not to murmur, sank heavily upon her frame: and, with that weariness of body, in which the unhappy often find a temporary relief from mental agony, she had stretched herself upon the couch; and heavy with abundant weeping, had fallen asleep.

Laurence, shading the candle with his hand, entered the room, in which there was no light, save what the moon threw in broad masses on the carpet and walls. He scarcely breathed, lest he should disturb her repose; as long, in bitter contemplation, he stood gazing upon this lovely ruin, and learned by cruel experience to know—what are the ravages of sin.

She slept so deeply that he soon became aware that there was no danger of awakening her: and, placing the candle upon the table, he softly let down the curtain to shelter her head

from the window; and to shade her eyes from the bright moon-beams that fell in bars of light and darkness over her face; giving a something flickering and unearthly to her features — Then the thought that she might awaken, and find him gone, and feel deserted and perplexed, distressed him; and, taking a scrap of paper that lay on the table, he wrote these few words:

"Farewell—My friend Trevor will be with you by nine o'clock, at latest. Before that time, you may be able to think, without guilt, of one, who, guilty or guiltless, living or dying, will never cease to adore you."

He laid the paper near her, where it must inevitably catch her eye on awakening—and then, after many a wistful gaze—many a heavy sigh—many a retreat, and many a return—he summoned all his resolution, and, without looking back, hastily left the room.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Trevor was in the dining-room at half past three, and telling Laurence that it was time to be off, and that he would relate the nature of the trifling arrangements necessary, as they went along; the two gentlemen entered Laurence's cab: and, Trevor taking the reins, they left town by Cumberland-street; and, passing through several cross lanes, found themselves in that lonely part of the way lying between West End and Hampstead, now crossed by the new Finchley road, but then quiet, still, and secluded.

Here, leaving the cab in charge of the boy, Mr. Trevor, taking the pistols out of the carriage, led Laurence, through what were then a few lonely fields, to one, protected from observation by the sudden rising of the bank, surmounted by a wild pear-tree, and sheltered on the other side by a high hedge; at this season rendered impervious to the eye by the tangled bushes of wild roses and woodbine that rose, straggling and fantastic, almost to the height of the trees.

The place was at present solitary, and the sacred silence of the rising morning, as yet unbroken, save by the busy rustling noise which the birds, those stirring housewives, make in every bush and tree, at that sweet hour of prime. The dew lay on the grass and herbs; and the soft misty veil, which gives earnest in England of a brilliant day, hung over that magnificent landscape, on which Laurence, as if taking a last farewell of a world so beautiful, fixed his melancholy eye. Beneath him stretch-

ed the glorious plain, rich with woods, and hills, and champaigns, and groves; the magnificence of nature enhanced by the splendours of that vast and gorgeous city, which now spread to the glittering beams of the rising sun its innumerable fanes, and towers, and domes, and sparkling lines of snow-white palaces;—that vast hive of living creatures—each so minute, so feeble in his form—yet, in his world of sensations and of thoughts, so vast, so important, so infinite! But now the restless tumult of human passion, within the pulses of that mighty heart, was still—at rest, after the vain agitations of the day—all still, save the speck, the atom, the worm, now crawling on the extreme verge of existence, hesitating, speculating, marvelling:—such was the reverie of Laurence, as with folded arms he stood, calmly waiting the moment of his fate; while Mr. Trevor, with an air of deep concern, remained watching the path by which he expected Captain Vivian to approach.

"I see them coming," at last he said.

But at those few syllables, all the calmness of Laurence forsook him in an instant. The blood rushed to his heart—the colour flew into his face; he trembled—he shook—he could scarcely stand. The reality of actual presence—to see!—to face!—Harry!—Vivian!—the man he had loved—the man he had betrayed—to meet him—to confront him! It is impossible to calculate the effect which the appearance of one we have wronged, suddenly presented, will produce. Few dare encounter the ordeal—all fly instinctively from the face of those they have injured; but so to meet a friend! All the circumstances of their last parting—Harry's wringing hand and faltering voice—the tender accents in which he confided his all to the faith of Laurence: the looks—the words—his own solemn oaths—his own paltering purposes—rushed to his mind with that dreadful force, with which we may imagine our forgotten sins, our obliterated acts of

wrong — our carelessly atoned for errors — crowding in confusion on the memory, as we stand in trembling agitation before the awful bar of final judgment.

Harry approached steadily and calmly. His eye was serene, serious, yet mild—his face pale. A sudden hectic passed over it, as he first looked upon Laurence; but as suddenly subsided. He came forward, followed by Captain Sullivan; and, having exchanged salutes with Mr. Trevor, remained without suffering himself to be mastered by any external sign of emotion, while the seconds arranged the few necessary preliminaries.

Not so Laurence—he had turned away; he could not endure to look upon the man, once so tenderly beloved.

His heart was indeed wrung; and it was with great difficulty that he could so far retain his self-possession as to forbear from groaning aloud—All the softness of the mother melting within his bosom, he longed to fling himself

upon the earth, to kneel before his friend, confess his fault, and implore his pardon;—he longed to crawl in the dust, and kiss his feet with all the abjectness of remorse and shame.

He stood thus, his breast heaving, as if it would burst—his breath thickening—his frame shaking; when Mr. Trevor touched him on the shoulder, and, presenting the pistol, told him to turn and face his adversary.

"The dropping of my handkerchief is the signal," said he: but Laurence listened as though he heard not; his eyes were dizzy—his head swam—he fumbled with his pistol instead of holding it as he ought to have done.

"This way," said Trevor. Laurence turned, as it were, mechanically—his knees knocked together—his hands, as if in a spasm, suddenly contracted; the pistol was a hair trigger, and, as he raised his arm convulsively, it exploded .... a loud report! .... and Vivian dropped senseless on the grass at his feet.

Laurence clapped his hands over his fore-

head, and with a shriek that rang through the heavens, fell down upon his knees, and thence tumbling forwards, rolled over towards the hedge; while Trevor and Sullivan sprang forwards to assist the wounded man.

The face was one mass of blood—the head seemed shattered in pieces. The two young men, almost insensible with horror, could at first only kneel down on each side of the body. Captain Vivian was, to all appearance, dead. He lay extended on the turf—his hat off—his fair hair scattering on the ground—a miserable, mangled spectacle.

Sullivan's tears streamed warm over the insensible countenance of his friend; while Trevor, more composed, though not less affected, lifted the hand which lay by his side, and began to feel for a pulse.

"He breathes yet," said he, at length. "He is not dead!"

"What a cursed thing we have no surgeon!" said Sullivan. "What must be done?"

"Fetch some water in your hat; there is a stream in the next field—and then run for help!"

When the water was thrown over the unhappy Vivian's face, he uttered a low groan, like one in mortal pain, who is insensible to every other sensation. Trevor, then, with a fortitude which vanquished the repugnance of nature, endeavoured to ascertain the extent of the injury. The eyes, and upper part of the face, presented nothing but a disfigured mass; and the blood was welling fast from the ghastly wound.

"We must send for a surgeon before we move him. — Hampstead is not far. — Leave him with me, while I endeavour to staunch the blood, and keep life in.—You fly for help."

Sullivan was off instantly, while Trevor, placing himself on the grass, endeavoured to abate the flow of blood, as best he might.—He was thus engaged, when, lifting up his

head, a spectre suddenly confronted his sight. Haggard—stiffened—his hair erect, stood the form of Laurence Hervey.

"Is he dead?" said he, in a hollow tone.

"No," said Trevor. "Hervey, I saw it all. You are the most unhappy wretch that ever the Almighty has been pleased to create—but for this you are not to blame. What do you intend to do?—you must not stay here."

"Why not?"

"There is no knowing—this is an ugly business; it would drive you mad to be confined for weeks, like a wild beast in a cage, waiting the decision of nature—gnawing your own heart-strings. Be guided by me—return to that place—wait till I can tell you something more certain of the result of this most cruel affair—I will come to you!"

"I don't know," said Laurence, in a stupid confused tone, "what it is you want me to do. I don't clearly see what all this is about;" looking as if he were rooted to the spot, he

turned his head in a strange unmeaning manner from one side to the other.

"You must go and sit down there," said Trevor, with authority, pointing to a corner of the field, "and wait till I come to you."

"Yes," said Laurence, "I understand:" and, seeming to obey the external impulse, something in the manner of a sleep-walker, he returned to the hedge-bank, and, sitting down, buried his face in his knees, in a stupid, idiotical manner.

The surgeon soon arrived. He found the unfortunate Captain Vivian apparently recovering some little sensibility; for he shrunk and gave signs of suffering, on his wounds being touched. After a careful examination, the surgeon gave it as his opinion, that, though presenting a very alarming appearance, none of the wounds were of necessity mortal. The pistol had exploded, as Captain Vivian, in the act of turning, presented a side face to Hervey's fire, and the ball, which

otherwise must have penetrated the brain, had shattered the cheek bones and brow, leaving the vital parts untouched. The total destruction of the eyes appeared, however, to be the probable consequence of the injury; but on this it was impossible yet to decide.

The first thing to be done was to convey Captain Vivian, nearly exhausted through loss of blood, as quietly as possible, to the nearest place where he could be put to bed — and Sullivan, having summoned the servants from the carriages, and made a sort of litter of the cushions, with the help of Trevor, assisted the men to lift him from the earth; and, followed by the surgeon, the melancholy procession set forward, towards West End.

But before he left the ground, Trevor, so soon as the surgeon had pronounced the wounds not to be mortal, had stepped to the place where the wretched Laurence still sat, his face buried in his hands; and having informed him that he trusted no irremediable in-

jury had been sustained, he, with the greatest kindness, endeavoured to soothe the agitated mind of his friend; for whose reason he began to entertain the most serious apprehensions.

Laurence, who had somewhat recovered from the distracting confusion of thought into which he had at first been thrown, listened to his remonstrances; and, endeavouring to collect his scattered senses, suffered himself at length to be put into his cab; and Trevor, having written an address and a few lines on the back of a letter, enclosing his card, gave it to the servant, desiring him to drive, without stopping, to town, and, by the least frequented streets, carry his master to the place designated.

"You will find a very old acquaintance of mine there; and at his house you will lie *perdu* a short time, till we see a little better before us—I will come to you as soon as I possibly can."

Laurence grasped his hand, put his face close to his ear, and whispered:—

"Iñez."

"I understand you—I will go to her the instant I return to town—I will take care of her."

"God bless you," said Laurence fervently; and throwing himself back in the cab, he shut his eyes, and passively allowed himself to be guided at the discretion of his servant.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Trevor returned to the field, he found the surgeon arranging the cushions for his patient's departure, and he directed the gentlemen and servants so to place their arms as to form a sort of litter; but, in spite of every precaution, it was impossible to move Vivian without apparently occasioning the most intolerable agony. His groans were terrible, for he had not yet sufficiently recovered his senses to master or conceal these symptoms of pain; he, however, was carried down into West End: but here his sufferings were so great, and the

flow of blood bursting out afresh, so alarming, that they laid him down in utter despair, where the different roads meet.

It was still so early, that no one appeared to be stirring in the neighbouring houses: but as they hesitated whether to summon some of the inhabitants, and ask to be taken in, or what other course to pursue, the green gate of a small garden opened, and an elderly gentleman, whose formal, old fashioned air, designated the retired tradesman, stepped out, and in a voice where more of the clear treble than of the manly bass predominated, and simpering and somewhat conceited manner, begged to know whether he could be of any service.

"It appears to me, gentlemen, that you are in distress—I have been looking at you all the way, as you descended the hill; for I am an early riser—and have been employed in my garden more than an hour. I think there is a wounded gentleman among you."

"Indeed, sir," said Sullivan, "you may well

say we are in distress. It is impossible to be in greater; this gentleman can proceed no farther."

"Oh, my stars above! what an awful sight!" exclaimed the old gentleman, approaching nearer. "A very dreadful spectacle — and one never beheld by these eyes afore— Gentlemen, this poor young man, sadly wounded, as I am alive, is in a desperate condition."

As he slowly dragged out these expressions of commiseration, Sullivan, in his endeavours to do something for his friend, pushed the old man impatiently on one side; but Trevor, looking at a countenance in which he, penetrating and benevolent, could trace lines unremarked by the somewhat exclusive young officer, said:—

"Indeed, sir, we are in great distress — This unfortunate gentleman can proceed no farther—Is there any inn?—public house?"

"No, sir. The inn is a low noisy place, at

the corner there—very noisy, dirty, and disorderly, as such places in the vicinage of Lunnun, too frequently are;—but I was just going to suggest, when that young gentleman—a very young gentleman, I believe—pushed me so rudely away—but that was, perhaps, not ill meant, he was in haste;—I was just going to suggest, there is my own house, gentlemen—the garden and all quite quiet, and surrounded as you see, and at a great distance from the road. I have a well-aired bed in my best chintz room—and if the gentleman could make himself easy there—why he is very welcome to all my poor little matters."

Trevor glanced rapidly at the cold, precise, yet kind and worthy countenance, of the old fashioned citizen, and then at the surgeon.

"By all means on earth," said Mr. Hart. "There is no other chance of life."

"Sir," said Sullivan, turning round suddenly, and taking the old man's hand, "I thank you, as if you had saved my own life—

and honour you as my father—Pray let us not lose a moment of time, but get my unfortunate friend to thy chintz bed—thou worthy good Samaritan."

"This way, gentlemen," with an air of most patronizing self-consequence; "through this small gate—stay, there is a coach road. Let me undo my great gates, as I call them—Plenty of room, as you see, gentlemen—though carriages seldom enter, on account of my gravel walk—One likes to see a place a little in order—Pray, gentlemen, walk in—Is it to the chintz room you would wish to go? Stay till I have ordered Biddy to lay on sheets—quite right, sir—not wait—this way—up stairs—somewhat narrow for a villa of this respectability. That will do—lay him down. Pray don't regard soiling the counterpane—What's a counterpane in a matter of life and death? Do you think he will be well here, sir?" to the surgeon, who, busily employed about his patient, heeded not his loquacious host

to whom Trevor took upon himself to reply.

"We cannot be better. It is impossible to express our sense of your hospitality—if it be possible to save his life, you have done it, sir."

And Sullivan—"God bless you, sir—God bless you, sir;" while the old man bridled and looked modest.

It was well he had been so magnanimous about his counterpane, which was soon soaked with blood—large drops of which had fallen upon the carpet of pink and green roses.—This last mischief, the old gentleman, stooping down, endeavoured to remedy with his pocket handkerchief; but, finding he only made things worse, he straightened himself again with a generous "no matter," and then, on hospitable thoughts intent, bustled out of the room to commune with Biddy on the subject of breakfast.

The gentlemen now busied themselves with

arranging their patient in all the comforts which an excellent down bed, well stuffed mattrasses and pillows could afford.—Biddy soon appeared with sheets — The curtains, flaunting with the gaudiest colours, were arranged — the blind of the bow-window let down—and the chamber assumed an air of perfect comfort and quietness.

It was now decided that while the surgeon and Sullivan remained at West End, that Trevor should proceed with all possible haste to town, and summon that distinguished surgeon, Mr. X. to attend upon Captain Vivian; his injuries, it was plain, being of a nature to require the assistance of the most consummate skill and experience.

As Trevor entered the little lobby, he was met by his host—

"Well, sir, what news of our patient? Does he find himself somewhat more comfortable?—And shall you gentlemen be ready for breakfast?—I think you must be impatient for

something—I suppose you are more than usual early this morning—You fashionable gentlemen seldom are out of your beds before one or two o'clock, I am told—I fear it was for no good you were out at this time.—A *jewel* (duel) I guess, or rencounter of that nature—Well, well, I ask no questions—quite discreet—But, my stars, sir, where are you going?—This is the way to the breakfast-room—for I have three rooms on this floor, besides offices."

"I thank you, sir," said Trevor, "but I must be away to London."

"Well, but one cup of tea—hissing hot—all ready."

"One cup of tea, then—and thank you, sir," said Trevor, whose lips and throat were husky and parched.—Having drank it, he was in Vivian's cab; and a few minutes brought him to Old Burlington Street.

The servants were just opening the shutters; and a slip-shod housemaid, in that sooty dishabille in which it is the good pleasure of London

housemaids to perform their labours; that dark envelope, from which, at the hour of noon, the future butterfly emerges in all the elegance of lace and ribbons; and a lounging, powdered, fine gentleman of a footman, with hose ungartered, and knee straps hanging about his knees, were the only living creatures to be seen.

The master of the house was yet in his bed-room, from which, without any unusual signs of hurry, the liveried fine gentleman proceeded to dislodge him;—the battered and dusty cab, at the door—the heated horse—and the hurried and disordered air of Trevor, denoting nothing sufficiently aristocratical to warrant extraordinary hurry. Trevor forbore to send up his card; but, becoming impatient, he left the room into which he had been ushered: and, finding the man cleaning the splendid lamp in the hall, asked hastily when Mr. X. would be ready.

"Can't take upon myself to say!" said the man.

"Did you tell him it was a most urgent case?"

"Upon my word, we have so many urgent cases; and it is very unpleasant for gentlemen of eminence to be worried up and down at every body's command."

"Did you deliver my message?"

"Can't justly recollect whether I exactly delivered the message. Mr. X. seldom has time to listen to long messages: we find it of little use to attempt to hurry him."

"Where is his dressing-room?" said Trevor, who never wasted time by going into a rage. "I will speak to your master myself."

He knocked at the dressing-room door:—

"Mr. X.!"

"A voice I know!—God bless my soul! Mr. Trevor, can it be you? Why did you not send up your card?"

"I sent up word it was a most urgent and

distressing case," said Trevor; "I fancied that might do as well."

"Damn the fellow; he never said a word of the sort — but what is it? — ah! a mystery. Come in while I finish dressing, and tell me all."

The *all* being explained, Mr. X. was as speedy as he had hitherto been dilatory, and, accompanied by Trevor, was soon on the road to West End.

Trevor had at first intended to execute, without delay, his painful task of apprizing Mrs. Vivian of what had happened, leaving Mr. X. to proceed alone to Hampstead; but, on second thoughts, he determined first to hear the opinion of that eminent surgeon, before he communicated with the unfortunate Iñez. He wished to spare her the racking alternations of hope and fear, which she must endure before fresh intelligence could be procured; and he believed that, if, as he anticipated, the worst should already be over,

she had better hear it at once—certain that little could be added to the agony, with which the first intelligence of the accident must be received.

When the gentlemen arrived at Mr. Palmer's, they found the blinds down, the passage laid with green baize, and an air of universal stillness pervading the house. Mr. Palmer opened the door himself; saluted them in a whisper; and stepping upon his toe, led them into his breakfast-parlour, where the surgeon from Hampstead was waiting, whispering, as he trod softly along:—

"Quiet—quiet—quiet is every thing!—we shall do very well with quiet! I have ordered Biddy to get list shoes, and would recommend the same to you, gentlemen. Your boots creak, begging your pardon, Mr. Drover.—Well, sir," to Mr. X., "shall we proceed upstairs?"

"Be pleased, sir, to let me speak to this

gentleman alone, first," said Mr. X. looking imploringly at Trevor.

"Come, Mr. Palmer," said Trevor, "let you and I have a walk in your garden; and you can tell me all that has happened while we have been away."

"Yes, sir, most assuredly; but I have not seen the unfortunate young gentleman again—That young captain would not allow it. He is wilful, sir; those young gentlemen are so; but a gentleman of your sense and experience knows better. This way—there are three steps—and now you are in my kitchen-garden, as you perceive, sir—garden *potager*, as I understand the French call it. I shall have plenty of fruit this year, though the March frosts and those vile slugs have done me unknownst mischief...."

The opinion of Mr. X. confirmed that of Mr. Hart, the other surgeon. He pronounced none of the wounds to be of necessity mortal: but the laceration of the muscles had been such

that he apprehended the most fatal consequences, unless the circumstances of the case should prove favourable in the extreme. With regard to the eye-sight, he refused to decide as to its absolute destruction or not: he however declared that nothing but a care and attention, almost super-human, could preserve it—indeed, nothing but the most unremitting solicitude and skill could afford even a chance for life. With this sentence, and, having given the most minute directions, Mr. X. entered his carriage; to be whirled away from one picture of intense suffering to another; and with that stoicism of habit, the only stoicism to be depended upon; and that indifference to human anguish, which, under other circumstances, would excite our horror; to pass from scene to scene of misery, impassible as the frozen ice, yet administering the relief within his power, with an assiduous attention which genuine feeling might vainly emulate. Such are the

advantages and disadvantages of habitual exertion in the remedial science.

Trevor, who was no surgeon, and had a heart tenderly alive to sympathy, sat by his side, a prey to the most distressing feelings; while Mr. X. chatted carelessly away of politics, scandal, and what not; and, stopping at his own door, having vainly invited Trevor to breakfast, ran in to his comfortable meal, preparatory to an appointment for performing one of the severest of surgical operations.

Trevor alighted, and threaded the streets which led to the Albany. The clocks were ringing ten, as he entered it. He was shown in silence up to the room where Mrs. Vivian still remained.

She had found the billet left by Hervey, and had well understood its meaning—and, reading in it, as she thought, a just and inevitable sentence upon them both, she had endeavoured to compose her mind so as to meet with

decency, that intelligence, the mere anticipation of which froze her veins with ghastly horrors—But these were no longer the terrors and anxieties of one who loves, for the dangers of the beloved object—No: that illusion had, as by a charm, vanished from her breast: vanished, the first instant she had read her husband's letter. — As from one, fascinated by some strange and unnatural influence to evil, the spell had been suddenly broken, and for ever: and all the warm affection she had borne her husband had been restored in its first intensity —alas! restored too late.

She had anticipated the death of Laurence, rather with that secret horror with which we should contemplate the execution of some malefactor; of whose crime we had furnished the occasion, than with the softness of a dearer feeling: and, looking upon this catastrophe as her own proper punishment, it was her desire so to meet it, as to add no additional disgrace, to that heavy load of infamy, which

she had prepared for herself, and those she loved.

She had therefore risen from her couch, and having arranged her hair in the closest order, smoothed her dress, and wrapped round herself once more the large decent folds of her cloak; she waited in still and patient expectation, the striking of that hour mentioned by Laurence.

About eight, on a woman-servant appearing with tea, she took some; but attempting to swallow a morsel of bread, was nearly choaked: so she contented herself with that effort, and returned to her posture of expectation.

Nine o'clock rang — half past: — in spite of all her exertions, her heart began to beat with rapidity: — ten — she heard some one enter the apartments — the door opened — and Mr. Trevor appeared.

She looked up, while her pulses seemed suddenly to pause. — She could not speak — She could only, by a violent effort, keep upright

and prevent herself from sliding upon the floor.

Trevor approached with a countenance of which he did not even wish to conceal the deep concern.—He wanted to prepare her. He wanted, by the expression of his face, to prepare her for the melancholy intelligence of which he was the bearer. He sat down by her, hesitating how to begin, or what to say.

She spoke first.

After one or two sighs, and a gathering of the breath—"I know what I have to hear—I am prepared for it—Great criminals should endure, at least in patience, the consequences which they have brought upon themselves. You will relieve me by saying that all ended speedily."

"I am afraid—admirable as is your constancy and composure, that you are *not* prepared for what I have to tell——"

"How!—there could be but one termination!"

"Mr. Hervey has escaped unhurt."

No triumphant joy shone in her countenance, but she looked relieved and grateful, and, in a very humble voice said, "Then I thank the mercy of God, which has suffered the consequences of my errors to terminate here—it is a very great relief to my mind."

"Alas!" said Trevor, looking ruefully in her face.

"What?" said she, with a searching look, suddenly recovering her energy; and fixing upon him eyes that sparkled with animation —"no—no—I do him injustice—he could not be so cruel."

"There has been a very unhappy accident —by some strange mismanagement, Mr. Hervey's pistol—"

She looked transfixed, with her mouth and eyes starting open.

"Exploded—He is not to blame—but Captain Vivian—. . .He is still living," cried Trevor, hastily.

But, before he could articulate this, she had

sunk down upon her knees—wrapped her head in the folds of her cloak, and, burying her face in the cushion of the couch, remained some time motionless.

By her attitude he saw that she had not fainted: indeed, he heard her low, suppressed groanings; and the heavy breathing as of one struggling with herself—He left nature, in this dread moment, undisturbed—and, in about ten minutes, for so long did that mortal agony last, she rose. No tears were on her cheeks—her eyes were dry and stony—a dark, troubled cloud of despair hung over her brow, but she sat down, and said:—

"Will you be so good as to tell me, as tenderly as you can, all that has happened?"

Trevor related, with as much calmness as he could collect, the dismal story; to which the changing colour and varying expression of his auditor responded. She listened with deep attention—When he had concluded, she sunk into a reverie of some minutes, and then a soft beam

of comfort gradually diffused itself over her still beautiful countenance. Trevor then, in the kindest manner, made proffers of service.

"Your goodness is extreme," said she, "but I believe what I wish to do can be accomplished by myself—If, however, you will favour me with your card, I will take the liberty of applying to you—should that asylum to which I propose to fly, be closed against me—If you hear nothing more of me, I shall be, you may rely upon it, in security; and no person need be under anxiety upon my account."

Trevor, looking upon this most lovely creature in so desolate a situation, was with difficulty to be satisfied with such an assurance as this

"I would not be presuming—but this great city—Have you well considered what you are about to do?—but, no doubt, you have abundance of friends."

"Even yet?" said she with a sigh, "but where I go, I shall be perfectly secure—If

I do not find myself so, I will apply to you."

Trevor still lingered, but he so plainly detected an ill-suppressed impatience for his departure, that he felt compelled to take his leave; determining to call again in a few hours—He came accordingly at one o'clock, but Mrs. Vivian was already gone.

All he could learn from Hervey's servant, a stupid sort of fellow, was, that she had left the house, in company with his own wife; but that he had not thought of asking what for—and Trevor was obliged to rest satisfied with the slender consolation that, at least, she had not gone away alone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Inez had remained, after Mr. Trevor left her, lost in reflection—yet she seemed not so much stunned as excited by this climax to her misfortunes, and might have exclaimed, with something of the sentiment of Orestes—

"Graces aux dieux, mon malheur passe mon esperance."

The picture of her husband—that tender, faithful, injured husband—in consequence of her frailty cut to the earth, mangled, bleeding, helpless, blind, affected her in a manner which would, no doubt, have driven any one possessing a feebler mind, or nerves less elastic, distracted—With her, it produced a deter-

mination, force and energy, more than natural, perhaps, but free from the slightest tincture of mental disorder.—To go to him, to wait upon him, to tend him, to save him, became not so much a resolution, as an irresistible necessity—like that which drives the mother through the roaring flames, to snatch away her perishing child. To be near him—to look upon him—to hear him speak once more—appeared a recompense for all she must risk of humiliation and shame in the endeavour: and the persuasion that, if she attended upon him, she should save him, and that no one on earth could render him services, tender and efficacious as hers, can be compared, to borrow an illustration once more, from the most powerful of human feelings, only to what the same mother feels, impelled to the sick bed of her child.

But how to carry her scheme into execution? How, unknown, unmarked, to steal to Harry's chamber, to obtain the privilege once her own, now so wretchedly forfeited; and, as a stranger,

gain permission to perform those services, which, as a wife, no power on earth could have disputed with her!

After sitting some time, considering on the means of effecting her wishes, she began to reflect that, like other difficult objects, it could be accomplished only by one way—by the use of that master charm, which opens nailed prison doors—unlocks the secrets of the closest hearts—melts the most determined purposes—levels the most obstinate obstructions—by the all-powerful agency of gold.

She put her hand slowly into her purse, to enquire what was the present amount of the worldly wealth of one, who, yesterday, could have commanded hundreds for the most trifling pleasures. What was now the extent of her means, to accomplish the most important object of her life? She counted the gold as she poured it into her hand—ten guineas. Would that bribe? Would that persuade? It might afford the means of providing the necessary

disguises; but to tempt cupidity—what was it? —Then she called to mind the words of Isabel,—

"Not with rich shekels of the tested gold."—

She recollected that Mr. X. was a man above corruption, at least, above the vulgar corruption of money; and that if she were to succeed with him, it must be by the effect produced on his feelings, by her prayers and entreaties; and, with that sanguine persuasion, under which those new to the struggles of this world imagine their energy and their eloquence will bend all to their purpose, she resolved to set forth, without delay, to go to Mr. X., and, offering herself for employment as a nurse for the sick, endeavour to gain permission to attend upon Captain Vivian. She was sanguine enough to believe that she should be successful—but if difficulties should arise, she determined, in defiance of shame and humiliation, to declare who she was, throw herself upon his pity, and entreat permission, in hum-

ble garb and as a menial attendant, to superintend her husband's recovery.

The first thing to be done was to disguise herself in the dress of the character she intended to personate; and, for this purpose, it was necessary to have clothes—but her impatience to quit the abode of Laurence would not allow her to think of sending for them there—and to go out alone, traverse London streets, of which, excepting the larger ones, she was as ignorant as a stranger, and provide herself with what she wanted, appeared, at the very outset, an insurmountable difficulty. She now remembered the young woman who had brought up her breakfast. She had been struck with the decent gravity and compassionate gentleness of her demeanour; and she thought she might rely upon a countenance which bore an expression of goodness and purity that rarely deceives. She rang the bell—a thing she had before shrunk from doing in those apartments—but she was

now in no temper to regard refinements of delicacy.

When the man-servant entered, she, who before had been unable to look up while he happened to be in the room, addressed him without hesitation, and asked him whether the young woman, who had brought up her tea, was in the house?

"Not exactly," the man answered. She sometimes came to do needlework for Mr. Hervey, who had ordered her last night to come to attend upon the lady. He added, "She is my wife."

"Is she still here?—and could I see her again?"

"Certainly," said the man, in a grumbling sort of tone—"if she required it—but his wife was not hired to wait—and for his part"....

"I will make it well worth her while," said Iñez.

"Oh, doubtless!—but its not exactly the money——"

The colour was now rising fast to the cheeks of the unhappy Mrs. Vivian; but, faithful to her resolution, she humbled herself to shame, and said—

"I should be very much obliged to you, if you would allow her to come to me for a little while—I will pay her whatever you think right, and will not keep her employed long."

The humility of air with which this was said, touched even the vulgar piece of insensibility before her.

He should have no objection, if the lady would be pleased to recollect "that certain sort of folks were used to pay better, nor other sorts of folks:" and he left the room to send his wife.

The young woman came in with the same air of gentle reserve, that had distinguished her before.

"I am very much obliged to you for coming," began Iñez, in a faltering voice. "I am in very great distress for assistance, and if you

will help me to what I want, I will do any thing to serve you, and be grateful to you for ever."

"What is it, madam, that I can do?—I am sure any thing in my power"....

"Will you go out with me, then?—I cannot go through these streets by myself—I want you to get a coach, and take me where I can get such common clothes as would suit a maid-servant, before I go to the place where I am to be at—I am not coming here again—I want to go to service. Do you understand me?"

"I am very glad to hear you talk so, madam. I will do all in my power to help you—with my husband's leave."

"Certainly, with his leave.—Will you go and ask whether you may go out with me for a few hours?"

She returned, with leave. A coach was procured, and Iñez, wrapping her cloak once more closely around her, and tying her hat as

low as possible over her eyes, leaning on Mrs. Bell's arm, left the only roof in the world under which she had now a right to ask shelter.

They proceeded first to a ready-made clothes shop, where Iñez, having by the way informed her companion that she wished to hire herself out as a nurse for the sick, was, by her advice and directions, soon equipped in a printed gown and very close cap. On looking at herself in the glass, she found, however, that this did by no means sufficiently disguise her; but recollecting some tricks she had played as a girl, with certain of those dyes which are to be found on ladies' toilettes, she sent for a bottle, and stained with it her face and hands till they were as swarthy as those of a gipsy.—She then, in spite of all Mrs. Bell could say, began to cut off the long sweeping folds of her beautiful hair.

There is a sacredness in this lovely female ornament: and every woman feels as if there were something votive in the act when she

sacrifices it.—So feels the widow, as she makes this oblation to the memory of departed love; —so feels the devoted nun, as (separating from a world, perhaps too dear,) she severs it before the shrine for which she has forsaken all;— So feels the unhappy penitent, shorn ere she is received to that abode, where she is to learn, how slow and mournful are the steps she must tread to return—how painful the steep, so rapidly descended;—So felt Iñez, as, Magdalene in heart, her beautiful head bowed down by penetrative shame, she severed tress after tress of those silken waves of lustrous black, and remained shorn of her fairest ornament; that mysterious veil which had added such charms to her beauty.—She felt that she was performing an act of humiliation, called for by her crime; and which carried with it a far deeper sense than the other degradations to which she had submitted.

When this was done, and the small, delicate head with the remaining hair, cut plain over

her forehead, were covered by a muslin cap, she felt that she was so altered as to defy common observation. Her husband's eyes, alas! which she might have found it hard to deceive, could no longer discern those features, once so fondly dwelt upon.

It was about one or two o'clock, when two respectably dressed women knocked at the door of Mr. X.'s house: and begged to know whether they could see him on business.

The footman, who was now dressed for the day, and was not, on that account, one whit less indolent, or less insolent, than he had been at seven in the morning, begged to know their business, and he would see.

"We want very much to see Mr. X., sir," said Mrs. Bell. "Would you be pleased to tell us whether he is at home, or when he is likely to be at home?"

"Good woman, will you be pleased first to tell me *your* business," said the footman,

glancing at Iñez, who, in spite of all her pains, carried that in her air which could not be disguised, "and what that strange gipsy-looking young baggage has to say to *my* master—I fancy, young mistress, you have mistaken the house."

"No," said Mrs. Bell. "This house belongs to Mr. X."

"Right, madam, upon my honour—but what do you want with Mr. X?"

"To speak to him."

"On professional business, is it?—then I must tell you, you're too late.—We don't see patients after twelve o'clock—so be pleased to call again.—I've turned dukes from this door, before now.—Mr. X. will *not* be disturbed, at this time o'day."

"It is not exactly professional business," said Mrs. Bell. "This young woman wants a place."

"A place!—not your first, I'll be sworn—as if Mr. X. had time for such nonsense. Place—place—a pack of nonsense.—You'll soon get

a place, young woman, I'll be bound—though you have such a queer-coloured skin."

The heart of Iñez first sickened, then fluttered—then faltered—then fired at this insolence.—Then humbleness, that blessed virtue, which extracts the sting from insult and contumely, prevailed.—She came up to Mrs. Bell's relief, and with great composure and dignity said—

" Young man—I wish to see Mr. X., and if you will take the trouble to introduce me at this unusual hour, I shall be very much obliged to you. Pray accept of that"—offering a sovereign.

The golden bough of the sybil was not more efficacious—the footman was used to crowns and half-crowns, but gold for a single introduction, was new—" Humph," said he, a mystery—I thought as much.—I'll step up, miss, and enquire.—Pray walk in for a moment."

He soon returned—" Mr. X. will see you.—Walk up stairs."

Mrs. Bell remained in the passage.

Iñez entered the drawing-room—the surgeon was alone.—So near the completion of her wishes—the moment of a meeting so dear—her courage forsook her.—She turned pale and red, and held by the back of a chair without speaking.

"Well—what is your business?" said Mr. X., in an abrupt, sharp voice—"I am in haste—What is it you want?"

"I am come, sir, to ask a great favour——"

"Well—go on—"

"I want a place, as nurse—Would you be so kind as to recommend me?"

"Young woman, you have mistaken...."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I have not mistaken. I wish to be employed as nurse to attend upon the sick.—I believe I could promise to give you satisfaction, if you would have the goodness to recommend me, where I desire to go."

"Have the goodness to recommend you, and where you desire to go.—Young woman, this is

a very extraordinary request. What can you mean?—Where do you desire to go?"

There was something in the appearance of the young woman before him so unusual, that it arrested even the attention of Mr. X. Otherwise he would not have bestowed so large a share of his golden moments upon her.

"I heard, sir, that there was a gentleman very badly wounded this morning—I thought you might be able to recommend a nurse to attend him—It would be an act of the most christian charity to recommend *me*."

"God bless my soul!—I never heard such a request. Why, where did you come from? Do you think we pick up nurses in the street, my good girl?—Have you attended in the hospitals?"

"I have been in the hospitals."

"And where is your recommendation?"

"I have none, sir: but only try me, and I will promise that you shall be satisfied."

"And in such a case!—Why, my girl, you

are asking for the care of a case that all the skill in England cannot save.—What can you be thinking of?"

The young woman seemed suddenly affected at this, and grasped by a chair. She recovered herself however, and said—

"Oh, sir, if you would have the kindness to try me!" Her voice was so soft, her manner of pronunciation so delicate, that it betrayed her to be of no vulgar order.

"It is a very strange thing," said Mr. X. rather severely, "what you can mean; and I am at a loss to guess, what can bring any one on such a fool's errand to me. You cannot suppose that I lightly engage those, to whom I commit the recovery of my patients. This case with which you desire to be entrusted (for what reason I am at a loss to conceive,) is one of the most lamentable that I have met with in the whole course of my practice.—If the young gentleman live, it will be next to a miracle—

If his eye-sight be recovered, more than a miracle—What can you intend by this absurd proposal?"

"I throw myself on your mercy alone—I have no plea to urge, but a desire so earnest to be entrusted—a persuasion so intimate, that I can be of service, when no one else could—that my care—my assiduity—my solicitous watchings—my earnest prayers, would effect that miracle, that I implore you, sir, for the love of God, recommend me—let me attend upon Captain Vivian."

"Captain Vivian!—who told *you* his name?"

"Alas! I know it too well!"

"You know it too well!"—Give me leave to ask who you are?"

"Alas! alas!" sinking on her knees before him; "I am his guilty wife."

The crimson which rushed over her face, dyeing it to the very temples, penetrated through the dark tint she had assumed, as she

bent herself to the earth, the picture of grief and shame.

"Mrs. Vivian!"

"Iñez kneeled.

"Mr. X., you see kneeling at your feet the most unhappy of those wretches whom vice has driven to misery. I am come to implore your mercy—Do not deny me—Let me go to my husband—I will go in secret—stay in secret—he shall never know I am near him—he shall not be agitated by me—Only let me be his servant while he is ill—Only let me tend him—dress his wounds—watch him and soothe him. Do you think I do not know how?—Oh, Harry! Harry!—let me smooth your pillow—let me assuage your pain—let me return to you! In pity, sir!"

Her hands were clasped and raised; her imploring eyes streaming with tears.

"Mrs. Vivian, you distress me very much; Pray—not in that posture—pray be seated, and let us talk coolly of this matter."

He raised her and put her into a chair.

"Then you will be so humane—so compassionate," said she imploringly.

"I am very sorry to say that it would be absolutely impossible at present. When Captain Vivian is better, some means may, we will hope, be found of effecting a reconciliation; but to force the subject upon him at this crisis, I would not answer for the consequences."

"A reconciliation!" said she mournfully. "Alas! I was not thinking of *that*—there is no hope of *that*—*that* is indeed impossible."

"Then on what other grounds, can you possibly wish me to allow of this most unusual proceeding? If it might be the means of restoring you to society, (pardon me, I speak bluntly,) I might perhaps—but indeed it is utterly out of the question."

"I only wished to be allowed to *serve* him," said Iñez in a desponding tone. "I had not even hoped for the poor consolation, of thus demonstrating to him my duty—my repentance

—I never proposed that he should know me; least of all dare I—do I—wish, or hope that which would be his dishonour. Oh, Mr. X!" again throwing herself upon her knees, "in mercy let me go to him. He may die—he may die—let me be with him." Her hands were wrung, and raised beseechingly above her head in all the agony of prayer—in vain.

The very agitation into which she had been surprised only served to confirm the surgeon in his first opinion, that, under existing circumstances, she was the most improper person in the world with whom Vivian could be entrusted. He, therefore, very patiently explained to her that, in the present condition of Captain Vivian, the slightest agitation might be fatal; that, as it was impossible therefore to feel assured that her feelings might not betray her, as they had already in the present instance done, that he should not think himself justified, &c. &c.

Mr. X. was justified by all the laws of common prudence, and yet how greatly was his

conduct mistaken!—Deficient in that nice penetration which enables its possessor to depart with impunity from common rules, he was denying Captain Vivian the tenderest of attendants, and one whose resolution was at least equal to the task she had imposed upon herself;—but he was accustomed to dwell in generals: he was accustomed to disregard, among his medical resources, that solicitous attendance which results from passionate devotion,—all those thousand alleviations which the ingenuity of affection can alone supply. He was moreover accustomed to be impenetrable to tears, and he soon shewed that he was not to be moved—indeed, that he was beginning to get rather impatient.

When Mrs. Vivian perceived this, she suddenly ceased speaking — remained perfectly silent for a few seconds—then rose from her knees, dried her eyes, and quitted the apartment without speaking another word.

Once more in the coach with the compassionate Mrs. Bell, Iñez, not to be diverted from her purpose, began to consult upon the possibility of introducing herself into the house of Mr. Palmer, without the knowledge of the surgeon, or without betraying her secret.

After a good deal of deliberation, the only plan that seemed to hold out a chance of success was to make out who the nurse might be, to whom the charge of Captain Vivian had been committed, and endeavour to persuade her to admit Mrs. Vivian, under the character of an assistant, to a share in her office. By this means, an opportunity would be offered to her of assisting in all those cares which she longed to bestow upon her husband, while, by absenting herself whenever Mr. X., or, indeed, any of those who had once seen her, should be visiting Captain Vivian, she might effectually escape discovery.

Mrs. Bell, armed with another sovereign,

returned to the house of Mr. X. for information, and, after about an hour, came back with the intelligence, that a nurse had been ordered down to West End; and that the servants supposed she must already be gone. Iñez resolved, therefore, to follow to the house of Mr. Palmer, send for the nurse, and see what could be done.

It was now between four and five; but the days were long, and Mrs. Bell promised to accompany her.

"But, indeed, madam," said the kind young woman, who, now in her confidence, entered fully into all her plans and feelings, "you will be quite ill before you get there. If I might presume so far as to offer you my humble room, I would get you a little tea before we leave town again."

"Indeed, I thank you," said Mrs. Vivian, whose aching heart and wearied limbs ill seconded her untired spirits. "I will go to your house, if your husband will not be angry,

and rest, and consider a little what we must say and do."

They drove into one of those small narrow streets which may be found appended to our most magnificent places and squares; in one of the houses of which Mrs. Bell inhabited a room, where she pursued her humble occupation of needle-work, and studied to preserve a decent appearance, in the midst of those narrow circumstances, to which gentlemen valets usually consign their wives.

Up a narrow, dark, dirty stair, the house noisy with the cries of bawling children, and the shrill tones of scolding mothers—amid those sounds, smells, and sights which render the habitations of the poor so abhorrent to the senses of the rich and the refined—under that mysterious system of things—by which fellow-men, separated, it may be, but by some fifty or a hundred yards from each other, are found,—some, amid all the attractions of elegance and beauty, rioting in an extravagance of waste-

ful luxury, almost amounting in itself to a vice —others after toiling all day to earn their scanty bread, consuming it at night, surrounded by their semi-barbarous companions, amid every privation of sordid—grinding—pitiless poverty.

"Misery makes us acquainted with strange bed-fellows;" so thought Iñez, as she made her way up stairs, and entered the little unprovided room of her new and humble friend. While Mrs. Bell covered her small round table with a snow-white cloth, blew up the fire, put on the tea-kettle, brought from her small cupboard her two only cups and saucers, spread her bread and butter, and, like the gentle hermit,—"pressed, and smiled,"—and endeavoured to cheer the pensive melancholy of her guest: Iñez, absorbed in reflection, sat in an old moth-eaten chair, the seat of honour of that humble abode, ruminating on the means of effecting a purpose, the desire for which had become only the more intense, the more it was reflected upon.

To see Harry once more—to be near him—to hear his voice, was contemplated with that excessive longing, which triumphs, sooner or later, over every human difficulty.

The only chance that now presented itself was to see the nurse, and bribe her so largely, as at once to overcome scruple and resistance: but where should she find the means? Five sovereigns were all that remained in her purse, after the expenditure of the morning; and what was that?

She was sitting and drawing that elegant web of silk and silver, listlessly through her hands, when Mrs. Bell rose, and presented a small parcel.

"I would not say any thing about it this morning, madam; but what would you wish to be done with this? It is too valuable to be left in such a poor place as mine, near so many lodgers, all, I am sorry to say, under great temptations from poverty."

And she laid on the table the watch and

massive chain which had suspended it round the throat of Iñez. The watch was small, and of great value, set with brilliants.

"Thank you—thank you, dear Mrs. Bell. I had quite forgotten it—Where could I have laid it down?"

"Where you changed your dress, madam, and seemed quite to have forgotten it—I brought it away to give you when you might want it."

"Oh! thank you—I do indeed want it—Where can I dispose of it to the best advantage?"

"Indeed, madam," said Mrs. Bell, "I am afraid that will not be very easy: people are so suspicious in this town. I am afraid, wherever it were taken, people would be for asking questions."

"True—I had not thought of that," said Mrs. Vivian, despondingly. "What can I do?"—

"I think, madam," replied Mrs. Bell, "that

if you would be pleased to shew it to the nurse, with the seals, it would be a warrant like of what you were, and that whatever you should be pleased to promise her, she might trust to —because she would know you must be the lady, by the watch, madam."

"True again, indeed—Thank you, good Mrs. Bell—It might, indeed, be difficult to prove who I am to a stranger—but what can I promise?—I who have nothing," mused she, "and am now penniless, without the means of providing myself even with bread."

"The watch, madam, might be sold by and bye," said Mrs. Bell, "and that would bring a very large sum—I recollect Lady Bligh, where I lived, had a watch just like it, and they all said it was worth two hundred guineas—only, just now....." and this naturally delicate and feeling young woman hesitated and blushed, from the fear of giving pain, "just now, I thought it might not be so agreeable, may be, to be offering the watch for sale."

"I see—" said Mrs. Vivian, whose mind readily seized upon an expedient. "I see, I can let her have the watch in pledge, and redeem it or leave it, as may be—and now, my good Mrs. Bell, if you have quite done tea, will you call another coach, and let us be going?"

A coach was soon procured; and Mrs. Vivian, having directed the man to drive to West End, and enquire for Mr. Palmer—entered it with her companion.

The coach stopped in the narrow retired lane, a little distance from the house, and Iñez, who found it now difficult to articulate, begged Mrs. Bell, as they had agreed, to call out the nurse to be spoken to in the lane.

She got out of the coach to wait, thinking the air might revive her spirits—It was a sweet still evening—The distant sound of the children at play—the cackling of a few geese—and now and then the sharp yelp of a little dog, came softly mingled from the village at a little dis-

tance—The place where she stood was shaded with dog roses, and honeysuckles, which strayed and waved in wild sweetness over her head —The hay was down in a field hard by, and filled the air with its delightful perfume, while a few birds were warbling their latest melodies among the bushes and trees of a neighbouring shrubbery. She sat down upon a little bank, and, looking round, endeavoured to fix her attention upon the scene, and quiet her nerves for the coming interview. She was then, at length, near him—A hundred paces alone separated her from that abode where *he* lay, who had been for so many happy, innocent years as a part of her being; and who still appeared to form a portion of her very self, united by those close, indissoluble ties which bind the wife to the husband of her youth—Vainly she attempts to wrench these ties asunder; she will find them resisting every effort to dissolve them, and asserting their force and their authority,

at the moment when she fancies them severed for ever.

Conjugal love is a sacred thing: and though many have held and do hold cheap its obligations, and undervalue its power, in comparison with the claims of that passion which it inevitably supersedes, it will be found to be more strong, and more devoted, and more enduring; and to make as essential a part of the nature of man, as if it were independent of human institutions.

To Iñez it appeared that to Vivian alone she of right belonged, though she had separated herself from him for ever, under the influence of a miserable infatuation; and it would be difficult to describe the complete dislocation of feeling which was the result of the false and criminal position in which she stood. She now in bitterness reflected on the destruction of all her social relations, the annihilation of every plan and hope of life. Then, as her mournful ruminations continued, and she bent

in spirit, submissively to her fate, like other criminals, she first began to experience what is meant by repentance—She began to comprehend some of the mysteries of her own moral nature—She dimly saw that pain, humiliation, sorrow, were not only the natural consequences of her fault, but the means of regeneration; the means of purifying her soul from the pollution into which it had fallen; and she experienced that irresistible desire of the penitent, to fall before the Author of all being—

> To prostrate fall
> Before him reverent, and there confess
> Humbly their faults, and pardon beg with tears,
> Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
> Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

She felt the power such tears possess to cleanse and wash away the stains of vice, as she covered her face with her hands, and once more ventured to address that God, to whom,

in the days of her error, she dared not turn, even in thought; and, as the streams trickled through her fingers, she prayed in the name of Him, who was not without pity for one fallen as herself—prayed for grace to repent as she ought—and by a life of humiliation, obtain a regeneration of her spirit, before her death—She felt, and understood fully, for the first time, what these things mean. Happy are those who arrive at such deep convictions while yet the soul is pure from grievous sin!

"Whatever infidels may vainly talk," a mysterious blessing surely waits upon prayer—A calm, an earnest of that peace which is a pledge of heaven in this world, began now to steal over the heart of Iñez—Her fluttering pulses became still—Strength to perform with fortitude whatever might lie before her—the consoling sentiment of atoning, by what she might endure for what she had done—

> Prevenient grace descending, that removes
> The stony from the heart—

soothed and tranquillized her. She rose from the bank on which she had been praying, and waited with a composure she could scarcely have conceived possible, the arrival of the nurse.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mrs. Crane, who now made her appearance, was a large, portly woman, of somewhat more than forty-five. Her countenance, decided and rather masculine, was stamped with those lines of strong good sense, which much communication with the serious business of life impresses on the face of a woman of clear understanding. It was evident, that Mrs. Crane was one never led through weakness to deviate from the plain, direct path which she had proposed to herself to pursue. Unlike most of her profession,

no bland insinuation sat upon her lip, no hypocritical softness modulated her voice, no doubtful expression falsified her physiognomy—Her clear grey eye, her well-set, firm mouth, and rounded cheek, carried an expression rather of benevolence, than of softness—of kindness, than of flattery—of authority, than of fawning.

Iñez looked up in her face, and with her usual quickness of perception, understood her character in a moment—Though by far the more sensitive of the two, (and sensitiveness is, in the intercourse of the world, almost equivalent to weakness), yet Iñez possessed that ability and penetration which render one human being so peculiarly the master of others,—a power she, during the smiling sunshine of her summer day, had felt little occasion to exercise. Now, with an important object before her, she seized instinctively on the means of its attainment—and estimating, at once, the force of her with whom she had to deal, she attacked her by a direct appeal to her interest and to her benevolence.

She saw Mrs. Crane was kind-hearted; she saw that she was not one to be withheld by trifling scruples from doing what she thought to be right. She also remarked certain lines in her face which testified that an appeal to self-interest would have its due, though not more than its due effect, upon one, who was, after all, paid every day for the exercise of humanity.

Mrs. Crane looked surprised when she was introduced to the rather singular looking person who stood before her: but Iñez came forward without the smallest hesitation.

"Mrs. Crane, I believe.—Has Mrs. Bell informed you who I—*was?*"

"Mrs. Bell said a lady wanted to speak to me."

"I am Mrs. Vivian—and I am come to make a request to you, which I trust you will not refuse. You know already, no doubt, why I have no right to approach Captain Vivian—why I am obliged to beg for that which I ought to command... I wish to nurse my —— Captain

Vivian—till his recovery.—I would not ask it, if I were not sure that in many things I could study his comfort better than any one.—I wish you to introduce me as your assistant—I will never betray you.—The thing shall be buried in silence, between us and this good Mrs. Bell. —Only make an excuse and introduce me as your maid.—I will give you one hundred pounds—Here is my watch as a pledge.—Keep it, till I redeem it.—Will you oblige me?"

Mrs. Crane stood for some few minutes reflecting, then, with hesitation, began what seemed like a denial; but Iñez, before the words could pass her lips, took her hand, and began again to urge her suit, with so much earnestness, laying open with a plainness almost approaching to magnanimity, her situation, feelings, and wishes—and urged her bribe with so much sincerity, that Mrs. Crane at length gave way, and said she would see what could be done.

She was about to propose that Iñez should

return to London for the night, and come back in the morning; but this could not be endured.—Iñez felt that to go away was the only thing impossible, and she said so. It was at length settled that Mrs. Crane should go to good Mr. Palmer, and, persuading him that Captain Vivian's situation required more than her own attendance, ask leave to introduce a friend into the house, to watch with her for a few nights.

Mrs. Crane was not absent long.—She soon returned to say that Mr. Palmer was quite satisfied of the propriety of the measure, and begged that Iñez and Mrs. Bell would follow her to the house.

Iñez did not attempt to speak. A sense of choaking about the throat rendered that impossible; but, anxious to prove her power of resisting emotion, she quietly took Mrs. Bell's arm, and signed to Mrs. Crane to lead the way.

They came to the little green gate, where

the busy host was already in waiting, to receive this new addition to his family.

"A very pretty young woman, indeed, Mrs. Crane. A mighty pretty figure.—Pray, young woman, walk *this* way—that leads to my front door—this is the back you see—here is the kitchen."

The kitchen!—There was a crowd of servants, in what was usually occupied by Mr. Palmer's quiet maid Bridget alone.—Among the rest, Captain Vivian's own valet,—happily, not John.—He would have known his mistress, however disguised.—The servants were chatting away, with the volubility common to their care-exempted race: a fire was blazing in the grate, and Bridget and another woman busy roasting a joint of meat, and preparing supper for all the gentlemen, who, being under orders of enquiry, chose to stay, and share the good things which the busy Mr. Palmer had prepared upon this momentous occasion; for his hospitality extended to the most humble of

his numerous guests, and his anxiety and vanity were evidently as much alive to provide for, and gratify the grand gentlemen's gentlemen, as to secure the comforts of the gentlemen themselves—Nay, it may be doubted whether these first, with all their second-hand exaggerated airs, did not appear to the simple citizen, the most important personages of the two.

Iñez glanced at the wide open door, and seeing what was before her, hesitated.—She feared discovery—far more she yearned for one moment's pause to relieve her full heart. To sit down in the midst of all this noisy vulgarity!—Little do those whose sensations have been refined by civilization, comprehend the depth and the breadth of that gulph, which separates them from those of a lower condition and ruder habits. Those who only observe the inferior classes of society while under the influence of that restraint, which the presence of their superiors invariably imposes, can form

little idea of the grossness, and the coarseness of their communications with each other—or how in the very tone of the voice, the forms of expression, even the mode of pronunciation when released from that influence, something may be detected painful and offensive to a purer taste. These things may be thought trifles, but trifles as they may be, are perhaps sufficient to prove that the distinctions of society are not altogether arbitrary.

Mrs. Crane and Mrs. Bell both felt for Mrs. Vivian—for people in their rank often shew the most delicate sympathy for the sufferings of a refinement in which they do not share.

"You had better come to my room," said Mrs. Crane. "Mr. Palmer, we will go up stairs."

"But won't the young woman take some supper?—Supper is just going to be taken up.—Do, miss, take some supper—a capital piece of meat, and a tart—Do, miss."

"Thank you," said Iñez, "I will go with Mrs. Crane."

The stairs were before her—those stairs—covered with their common-place carpet—bordered by their painted banisters.—To her eyes what did they not convey?—Those stairs—the last few steps that lay between her and the object of such earnest wishes—she longed to fly up—to open the door—to fling herself at Harry's feet—but she restrained herself, and pressed her folded hands close against her bosom.

"This way, miss," said Mr. Palmer, whispering. "Tread softly—may be he's asleep, poor young gentleman—hush!—hush!—that's his door—no—there's Mrs. Crane's room—that way."

Mrs. Crane opened the door into her own small apartment, which was nearly filled by a large bed.

Iñez entered—sat down without speaking—and, folding her arms against the side of the bed, laid her forehead silently upon them, and waited till the throbbing of her heart should subside, and voice and motion be restored.—To

weep, she refused herself, ignorant, when that torrent should once be set to flow, by what power to staunch its out-pourings.

Mrs. Crane respected her silence, and honoured her self-command. Like all those who have to do with the sick, she reverenced an abstinence from tears and weak complaints.—She stood by quietly: in about a quarter of an hour Iñez raised her head.

"Now, good Mrs. Crane, I can see him—may I?"

"We must wait a little. I left Captain Sullivan watching him. I will go in, and see whether I am not wanted.—The dressing should be looked to."

Iñez shuddered slightly.

"Is he sensible?" It was the first question she had ventured to ask.

"Yes, he is; but he does not seem inclined to speak, I think."

There was at this moment a knock at a small door placed in one corner of the room,

It opened, as soon appeared, into that in which Captain Vivian lay.

"Mrs. Crane!"

It was Sullivan's voice—Iñez hastily tied on the large bonnet which she had removed.

"You are wanted, Mrs. Crane. Will you please to come to Captain Vivian? The bandage is shifted."

"Directly, sir. Will you go down a little now?"

"Yes, I am going to town for a few hours. I shall be back very early in the morning."

He ran down stairs—Mrs. Crane approached the half-opened door—Iñez followed.

"How do you feel yourself now, sir?—The bandage has slipped, I see, a little."

"I think so"—in a voice so low and languid, that it was scarcely audible to Iñez, who, pale and cold as marble, stood at the half-opened door, afraid to enter, but finding it impossible to retreat.

The voice told at once the tale of Harry's

sufferings—It was faltering, broken, faint; but not with sickness alone: there was in it that tone of pathetic despondency, which speaks volumes to the ear. His heart was broken—she felt it was—She stood still, scarcely breathing—Presently he spoke again.

"What o'clock is it, good Mrs. Crane?—This is a weary day."

"It is near upon nine, sir—Will you take tea?"

"Yes, something to drink," languidly. "My throat is parched and dry."

"I will get you some directly—This young person is my assistant, sir—She will stay in the room while I go. If you want any thing, you will please to ask her."

She signed to Iñez to come in.

Iñez came to the bed-side.

There he lay—a ghastly figure—the upper part of his face covered with bandages, still foul with blood: his cheek below pale and haggard—his lips white, yet preserving their

expression of ineffable sweetness and candour—his hand faintly supporting his head—there lay the wreck of Harry Vivian.

She stood by his side and gazed.

She neither sighed, nor groaned—Two large tears rolled slowly from her eyes—this was all the emotion she shewed—At length, she slid softly on her knees and bowed her head, as if in acceptance of sorrow; and, after remaining some time immoveable, arose, and, with a composure the most extraordinary, sat down by the bed-side to watch. There is a despair which is calm—there is a misery which mocks expression—Feeble characters perish under it—those of more force, live, and move, and think, and act; burying the concealed and festering wound with the heroic self-command of the Roman Matron.

It was not long before Captain Vivian felt a light and soft hand (how different from the firm, strong, and not very tender touch of the nurse!) gently arranging the pillows under his

head, so as to relieve the uneasy posture in which he was helplessly lying—The bed, all ruffled and heated, was smoothed—the windows of the room softly opened. A fresh breeze played upon his fevered brow; a sense of comfort and rest seemed to steal over his frame. Tired and exhausted with continual suffering, the first moment of relief was inexpressibly grateful: he felt tranquillized by a charm he could not understand, but which seemed to soothe him with a strange sympathy—nature yielded to the gentle sensation—the irritation of mental and bodily suffering subsided, his hands sank languidly from his face, and he fell asleep.—She heard him breathe more quietly—she saw, by the expression of his countenance, that he rested—She, for one moment (it was but for one moment), almost felt that her sin was forgiven her.

All that night did she, with the permission of Mrs. Crane, watch by his pillow, administering the little refreshment he was able to

take; and, when he slumbered, lying herself down on the floor by his side; while he, too much confused in his sensations by his blindness and pain to attend much to what was going on, never remarked that he heard not once the voice of his attendant; but, grateful for her care, and soothed by the charm of attentions which seemed to divine all that he wanted, passed the night better than could by possibility have been anticipated.

The morning broke upon her with that calm, cold, mournful stillness, with which it visits the watchers of the night—To them it brings no cheering freshness on its wings, but chilly shivers, striking through the veins, and melancholy, pressing on the spirits—The candles were expiring in their sockets, as the sun began to make ruddy the eastern clouds, and light dawned upon the earth, though all was as profoundly silent as in the dead midnight.

This stillness gives a mournful character to the dawn, well known to those who, sitting by the bed of sickness, or of death, have seen its first faint streaks crimsoning the parting clouds.

Iñez was now standing at the window in melancholy reverie. She heard Captain Vivian move and sigh, as if awakening. His sleep had been rather sound than refreshing, and his head was evidently still confused and inclined to wander. The scenes and shadows of the last eight-and-forty hours were slowly passing before his fancy, as he lay between waking and sleeping. At last he muttered something—she listened with intense attention.

"It was all a dream—a horrid dream!—When shall I be awake?—Where am I?—In my cabin?—What was it?—Where is she?—and my children—and my home—where are they?—What did they tell me?—How was it all?—Why is she not here?—My Iñez—my Iñez, come back to me, my love!—Nay, let

us talk it all over.—Why were you not at home to receive me?—My Iñez! where are you? Oh there!—I thought you would come again?"

Once more he slumbered, for the sound ceased.

She had imposed upon herself a task of which she as yet knew but half the bitterness; every faltering accent struck her to the heart. She, too, looked back, as on a hideous dream, upon what had been done—She longed to forget—to press forward at his call, as in the days of her first happy affection—to cover his face with her innocent kisses—to obliterate all that had taken place—to blot out the dreadful past. Alas! alas!—Time past—the irreparable, the inexorable past!—Sin committed—the dark—the ineffaceable stain! She had done that

> Which takes the rose
> From the fair forehead of an innocent shame,
> And plants a blister there.

She had done that which had rendered her a thing infect, impure, no longer worthy even to

touch that hand which once had seemed to grow to hers—She had done that which had severed, by a deep, impassable gulph, herself and him, who seemed as half herself, bound to her with a oneness, an exclusiveness, which none but those united in a happy marriage can understand—

His cruelty was great, who bound the living body to the cold, inanimate corpse—but the sufferings of that miserable victim scarcely equalled the torments of those who exist, as it were, with half their soul of being bound up with a distant, parted frame.—But she was patient, submissive to sufferings too well deserved—She bent her head to the window, and let the tears stream down.

Morning advanced, and the misty twilight was succeeded by the more brilliant radiance of the ascending day. "The sun shone bright on every eye in the village" save hers and those of the unfortunate Captain Vivian, alas! to be visited by those beams no more. The birds were

hailing the rising sun, whose golden car, now high above the horizon, gleamed over the smiling landscape which spread before the window of the bed-room. The stir of business was in the house; all those pleasant sounds of awakened life and action, that speak so cheeringly to the heart.

She stood by his bed-side with Mrs. Crane—He was restless and full of suffering. It was evident that, now thoroughly awakened to a clear perception of circumstances, the anguish of his mind rendered the torments of his wound nearly insupportable—Restless, yet scarcely able to move—tears upon his heart, which, alas! could no longer flow from his mangled eyes.... The picture is too shocking — She saw and felt it all—and, as at intervals, the deep and heavy sighs burst from his bosom, they seemed to sever hers.

She dared not take that hand—she had lost the privilege to circle in her arms that head, and endeavour to soothe and soften anguish—

she dared not speak and bid him take comfort —and, might she so have spoken, alas! what comfort was there to offer?—She looked with a glazed, haggard expression of helpless sorrow, while Mrs. Crane endeavoured to allay the pain of his wounds, and to ease the bandages.

"Are you better now, sir?—Indeed if you could make yourself a little easy, it would help you—Let me bathe your hands with eau de Cologne," said she, giving the bottle kindly to Iñez; who felt, only when she was employed, as if delivered from the most racking torments.

"Thank you, Mrs. Crane," with another heavy sigh, "I will endeavour to be more quiet,"—another heavy sigh,—"I will be more patient—Is Sullivan come?"

"No, sir—he said he would be here very early;" and as she spoke, the bell of the gate was heard, and Sullivan might be seen crossing the garden. He soon entered the room, and Iñez retreated to the next apartment—

where, resting her aching head against the slender partition, she heard without design all that passed.

"Well, my dear fellow, how do you find yourself?" said Sullivan, in the cheerful accents of his friendly voice. Have you rested?—are you better?—how is your pain?"

"I have slept, I believe, good part of the night. I feel less stunned and confused than I did yesterday—I am beginning, I hope, to collect myself;—but I am a very unfortunate fellow, Sullivan;" and his voice faltered.

"Oh, you must not think of *that*—Oblivion—You must return to your profession."

"Sullivan," in a low hoarse tone. "You will not suspect me of a weakness unworthy of me;—but I hope she is safe... I hope she will be treated with honour... If she wishes to come away, I hope she will not want the means—I should be sorry if she had an inclination to retire from—from—his protection, I mean—I should very much desire that she should be provided

with the means of rendering herself independent of him.—I think, my good friend, it would be a very great consolation to me to know that she depended for subsistence upon one, who—oh, God of Heaven, why did she ever leave him?—one who was her legitimate protector—who has still a right—to—alas!" with a heavy sigh, "to what has he a right? But who has a title to consider what will be best for her, amid the unparalleled misery into which she has plunged us both?—Yes, Iñez, misery for both! I know you—Your tortures will equal my own!"

"But," said Sullivan, "surely you do not intend to—You cannot—The means of redress—You will have recourse to legal proceedings—to restore you, at least, to your liberty."

"No," said Captain Vivian, "I have no use for liberty—'Thou wert!—thou art!'" he checked himself. "Not unless it be *her* wish—What! drag her before a court of justice—have my hearth profaned—my secret love blasphemed—my sacred home disgraced, by such an un-

blushing display, of our joys—our griefs—our infirmities—our crimes and our despair!—No, no, Sullivan: Iñez shall not be made a fable for the idle, chattering town, through fault of mine—I will not assist to rend asunder that veil which yet may shelter her dishonour—I will not help to sully that name, whose brightness was my pride and glory—to bow that head in shame, whose lofty frankness I adored—No, no."

"But, Vivian—your own honour—consider—Things are gone too far—You cannot take her ——"

"Back—no," in a hollow tone; "that she has indeed rendered impossible—I have lost my Iñez—Honour—Love, forbid it—I have lost my Iñez—She is no longer the same—she is to me, henceforth, an alien and a stranger: but I need not forget what she has been—Her honour—her reputation—it may not be too late to rescue—but," and he mused painfully, "what if she should refuse to leave him?"

"I have heard," said Sullivan, that "she has already left him."

"She has!—I thank God—Then, Sullivan, will you learn where she has taken shelter? and will you, my good fellow, provide that she has those means necessary to the comfort of one—so tender—and so beloved? I want time to reflect upon the arrangements that ought to be made, should I live—should I die, she will be provided for by dispositions made before our last unhappy parting. Now tell me of my children—for a coldness and faintness is upon me—and the spirit is weak."

"Miss Vivian has taken your two sweet little girls to Roehampton—Mr. X. positively forbids her bringing them here at present, or even visiting you herself—but rest assured they are in good hands."

"I know it—I know it—Poor little destitute orphans! Will you go now, and execute the commission that I have given you? and if you could see my little ones—and carry them

their poor father's blessing, and bring me word they are well, I think it would do me good. Sullivan, I give you much trouble."

"God bless you, Vivian—how can you imagine such a thing? Send me over the world for you—I will be off this moment, and do what you desire."

And, running down stairs, he left the unhappy husband and tender father once more alone.

Alone, he indulged for a short time, without restraint, the bitter regrets which a sense of honour and dignity forbade him to display, even before the eyes of so close a friend as Sullivan—He yielded to a violent paroxysm of grief—while the name of Iñez, his beloved—his only life, joy, and hope—and of his children—his orphan, motherless children—mingled with his deep and heavy groans. She heard it at first with a distress that seemed so completely overpowering, that she felt rooted to the spot—but she was alone.—Mrs. Crane had left the

watching to her; and, dreading that the violent agitation which she witnessed might seriously injure him, she roused herself, and, opening the door of the partition, glided gently into the room, kneeled down by his bed, and in a voice distinct, but very low, said—"In the holy name of God—think of your children, and take comfort."

"Who speaks?" said he, suddenly arrested. "Whose voice is that?"

No answer. She dared not speak again: but the interruption had changed the course of his thoughts. Her purpose was effected.

"Who spoke?" he repeated.

"It was only your nurse"—in a low tremulous voice, which she endeavoured to disguise. "I beg your pardon, sir—pray excuse me."

"Ah!—speak again—speak again—That voice!" for she was silent—"That voice!" Alas, even the faint echo of those tones so fondly loved fell upon his heart with inexpressible

sweetness—The colour flew to his faded cheek. "Who *are* you?"

"I am your nurse, sir—a young woman hired to assist Mrs. Crane."

"Ah!" with a deep sigh, "is that all? Let me be quiet then, my dear: I think I may sleep."

Her hands, which were now icy cold, once more arranged his pillows: and then, statue like, she remained by him, trusting that her presence would restrain these dangerous bursts of feeling.

CHAPTER XX.

And what was become of Laurence?—Shall we follow him to a dark, gloomy apartment, in one of the narrowest streets of ancient London, where, devoured by his own thoughts, he remained, his head buried in his hands, the picture of stupid despair.

The excess of mental, as well as of bodily pain, terminates in insensibility, and stupefaction for some time deadened the poignancy of his feelings.—Like one in a dream, circumstances, present and passed, hurried through his fancy with a strange rapidity, independent

of the slightest act of volition. He saw his friend, in the bloom of youth, hanging on his arm, as they used to walk the parks together, discoursing, with animated frankness, on his hopes, his prospects, his designs. He saw the colour flash to his cheek, as he spoke of her—the, as yet, unknown to Laurence, the idol, the divinity of his adoration. Then, that garden at Middleton Court, rose up to his imagination.—He saw the lovely, fantastic Miss Thornhaugh indulging her airy caprices—the petulance and insolence of wit, innocence, and beauty;—then the second meeting,—the softened wife—the complete woman; the graceful, the gentle, the elegant—the happy husband, the confiding friend:—Portsmouth—the return—but at those thoughts, Laurence, the philosopher—the temperate—the sage—gnashed his teeth, and tearing off large handfuls of his hair, cursed the demon who had entered that paradise, and ruined the angel of purity once there enshrined. He saw her, as last he

had seen her, sitting shamed and miserable upon his hearth, beaten, broken down and blasted, like a beautiful flower all dabbled with mire, and aloud he cursed his being.

Towards evening Trevor came.

Trevor was one of those rare characters who, educated at a public school, a denizen for three years of a college, a witness of all the disorders which attend unbridled youth, and afterwards circulating freely in that great world of dissipation to which fortune and independence introduced him in London, had preserved, as by the native brightness of his own original temper, his heart pure from dissolution, his habits unstained by sin. A very deep and sincere sense of religion, for which he was indebted to his excellent parents (parents — for many have pious mothers, but few know what it is to see piety made reverend by the habits of a father,) had been, to a considerable degree, the talisman which had carried him undefiled through all the corruptions which surrounded him,—aided by

that calmness and well ordering of the passions, the best fruits of a careful and judicious education. The imagination of Trevor had not been enlisted on the side of vice, either by injudicious and scrupulous severity, or by ill-concealed license. He had learned to dislike and despise excess, as a weakness and a brutality; and to love virtue and order, for their own sakes.

The pain and shrinking of the soul with which he found himself involved in a tale so abhorrent to all his feelings as this of Laurence, may be conceived; and the tenderness with which he persevered in endeavouring to lighten the host of evils which now overwhelmed the unfortunate and guilty victims, proved, in this instance, at least, that the most generous benevolence, and the most rigid personal virtue, are not so incompatible, as some, not remarkable for the latter quality, have wished to make us believe. Still there was a feeling of indignation prevailing in his mind, when he

looked at Laurence, which, suppressed as it was by a compassion he could not but feel, gave a certain restraint and coldness to his manner which he found it impossible to overcome.

The immediate effect of this on Hervey was, however, so far good, that the want of sympathy he instinctively felt, induced him to check the violence of his present agitation, and, acting as a powerful sedative, perhaps, preserved his reason.

The first question was not for Vivian. Two men, loving the same woman, can have neither sympathy, friendship, nor affection. Jealousy is, in man, a master passion, and produces effects so wide and various, that we often overlook the original spring of those effects when witnessed. The husband of Iñez was no object of interest to Laurence.—The thought of what had happened was dreadful, and well nigh overset his mind—but his remorse, his tenderness, his anguish, were all for her.

"Where is she? What is become of her?"

said he, raising his head, but without rising from his chair, as Trevor came in.

"She has left your lodgings," said Trevor.

Laurence sighed. "I thought it would be so.—Where is she gone?"

"I hope,—indeed, I am sure, that she is safe," said Trevor, "but where she is gone, I have yet to learn."

"You have?—good heavens!—In this town! —Who was with her?"

"The wife of your servant accompanied her.—They went out in a hackney coach—where—the man could not tell.—I have made fruitless enquiries. I can get no trace of her. The people with whom they lodge say, that your servant's wife came in about five o'clock, with a young woman, a sort of upper maid-servant—rather an odd-looking person—that afterwards they went out—and she has not been at home since. I saw Iñez this morning.—She then spoke of some asylum that she should seek, but if that were shut

against her, she promised to apply to me.—Vivian yet lives."

"And is this all you know?"

He got up, and began to look about the room.

"Where's my hat?"

"You are not going out, Hervey," said Trevor. "Leave it to me.—Rely upon it I will not rest till I have discovered where Mrs. Vivian is lodged.—I came down here hastily, thinking you would suffer so much anxiety to know the state of ——; but rely upon it, wherever she is, she is safe.—The person she went with is a most respectable young woman."

The sympathies of Trevor were at this moment more engaged by the unfortunate husband than by the erring wife—and the accident by which he had struck the man, once his friend, appeared to him the dreadful climax in Hervey's fate, in comparison with which, all other circumstances were of trifling account. Satisfied that Mrs. Vivian was in no real danger, he

did not, therefore, share the agitation and anxiety of Hervey.

Laurence made no answer, but continued to look about the room. — He then rang the bell.

"I want my hat."

"You did not bring one, sir," said the foot-boy who opened the door.

"Go and fetch me one."

"Sir?"

"Buy me a hat," said Laurence, flinging to him a couple of sovereigns.

Trevor now interfered:—

"You had better remain where you are, Hervey.—Vivian is in a most precarious state. Consider what your situation is.—Wait till to-morrow. You shall have the earliest intelligence—you may safely leave all this to me!"

Laurence made no answer: he looked doggedly at the window: the moment the door opened, he seized the hat which the boy held,

and, without looking at Trevor, left the room, and the house.

Evening was now beginning to fall — he threaded the streets with rapidity, walking at his utmost speed, regardless of every interruption. Indifferent whether seen, or not, he passed up the Strand, and through the different wide public streets, until he reached the Albany. The first thing he saw was his servant, yawning at his door. The fellow started at the sudden apparition.

"Where's your wife?"

"Lord, sir—you do startle so!—My wife? I do not exactly know!"

"You scoundrel—Where has she been all day?"

"How should I tell, sir?—I suppose you know she went out with...."

Laurence arrested the name; he shuddered to have it profaned, by passing such lips.

"Where did they go?"

"I really can't say: but perhaps home."

"Where does she live?"

The man gave the direction. Laurence turned on his heel; he was, in a few moments, knocking sharply at Mrs. Bell's door. She was within, and opened it.

He came straight into the middle of the room.

"Good heavens!—she is not here! Where is she gone?—Woman, tell me instantly."

"Sir," said Mrs. Bell, with some reserve, "I was charged not to tell!"

"But I insist upon knowing, this instant," said Laurence, passionately.

"She is where you cannot go, sir," said Mrs. Bell, whose habitual awe and respect for Hervey had been much diminished since the morning. She now felt in the situation of one defending Mrs. Vivian from further contamination; and, inspired by the circumstances, the modest, humble, young woman became intrepid and firm.

"Good God!—What has she done? How dare you trifle with me?" seizing her by the shoulder, and shaking her with something savage in his manner. "Will you tell me what is become of her?"

"She charged me not to say, sir?"

"She charged you not to say?—You don't intend to say, reptile, that she mentioned *me* to *you?*"

"Not exactly that, sir; but she begged me to keep her secret. And oh, sir!" said the young woman, releasing herself from Laurence's relaxing hand, "Oh, sir!—don't try to follow her. She's where she ought to be, sir!—don't," clasping her hands, "don't ask of her.—She's in her duty now, sir!"

"In her duty—what do you mean by that? What wretched, presumptuous stuff is this?—in her duty!—Where is she?"

The woman was silent.

"Do you mean to be murdered?" said Laurence, setting his teeth. "Do you know, wo-

man," in a low tone, "what it is to enrage a desperate man?—Tell me, this instant, where she is, or I'll shake you to atoms!"

Mrs. Bell was now really frightened.

"Oh, sir! let me go! She's at West End."

"At West End?"

"She's gone to nurse her husband as was," said the woman, bursting into tears. "And may God help her, and support her—poor, poor young lady!"

Laurence fell back.

"She has cut off her beautiful hair," continued the young woman, seizing on the circumstance which had most affected her imagination. "And she has put on a cotton gown like mine: and we went first to the doctor, and he would not let us go; and then to the nurse, and she let us in; but he's never to know—they say it would break his heart outright to see her—poor—poor gentleman; but she is to be his nurse, by day and by night, and may that be a comfort to her poor heart!"

"Tell me all she did, from the beginning," said Laurence, sitting down.

The young woman did as she was bid, and told the story of the day.

Laurence extracted the minutest particulars relating to the behaviour of Iñez, and then, putting five guineas into the woman's hand, and having obtained an exact description of the house, he left her, and proceeded to West End.

With what design? Not with a hope—not with a wish to see Iñez again—but to watch over the house which contained her—to wander round its precincts—to rest his head upon the earth by night—to roam like a restless, unhouselled spirit by day—to glut his heart with a misery, of which the intensity can only be conceived by one, not sinking by slow degrees into depravity, but hurled at once, like some bright falling star, from excellence to darkness.

Laurence was, in truth, formed to taste the full bitterness of his situation—led, neither by the slow, insensible advance of profligate habits,

nor by thoughtless gaiety, to vice—the victim of great temptation, and of unsettled principles. With a mind which weighed, examined, and pondered over all the interminable relations between guilt and misery,—he conceived the horrors of his situation in their full extent; while his heart, not hardened by long licentiousness, but rather, as it were, softened by a certain refined self-indulgence, was tempered to endure the most poignant torments of remorse. The dreadful shock he had sustained when he saw Vivian fall, had produced the effect of deadening every other sentiment, save one—a sort of dogged sullen resolution, never to forsake Iñez —a defiance of every law, human and divine—of every propriety, of every danger, which might interfere with the absolute and entire devotion of each thought and feeling to her.

Six days and six nights might his blasted figure be seen, wandering round the fields, or stretched beneath the hedges; his hair rusted with the wind, his linen defiled, his clothes

in disorder; his eyes fixed upon that window which lighted the apartment, where, in fancy, he beheld stretched the form of the man he had most loved, while over it hung that penitent and broken Magdalene, who had grovelled on the ground before him, buried in the long folds of her hair, the victim of his passions.—

Six long days!

Trevor had ascertained where he harboured, and had made one or two fruitless efforts to draw him from this strange and wild way of passing his time—but he had been repulsed with a harshness, once foreign to the nature of Laurence; and, convinced, that there was something almost approaching to insanity in his determination, he had ended by leaving him almost entirely to himself—all interference appearing only to exasperate him, and increase the terrible irritation of his feelings.

CHAPTER XXI.

These days were passed by Iñez in the faithful discharge of her mournful duties — her heart alternating between hope and fear—if that could be called hope which bore, indeed, no promise of happiness to herself, and only flattered with the prospect of relief from the insupportable idea of having occasioned her husband's death.

On the fourth day, Sullivan, who was unremitting in his attendance, entered the room much earlier than usual, looking annoyed and anxious.

Iñez was holding the cup whence she had been supplying Vivian with tea.

"Mrs. Crane!" said Sullivan.

"Mrs. Crane is not here, sir," said Iñez, in a low tone of voice.

"How are you, my dear Vivian, to-day?" said Sullivan, going up to the bed-side.—"How have you rested?"

"Better," said Vivian.—"I have slept some hours, I believe.—My dear," to his nurse, "leave us now."

Iñez obeyed—Sullivan followed her.

"What is to be done?—Has Mr. X. been here to-day?—The Admiral is come to town, and insists upon seeing Captain Vivian.—I don't know what to say or do."

Iñez felt very sick, and turned to the window to conceal her face, and prevent herself from falling.

"What do *you* think?—May he be allowed to see him?"

"Sir?" repeated Iñez, gasping for breath.

Sullivan was too much occupied to perceive her emotion, he merely thought her stupid, and said, "If Mrs. Crane were but here, she would decide this business.—Mrs. Crane," for the good woman at this moment entered the room, "here is Admiral Thornhaugh arrived in town, and he wants to see Captain Vivian."

"Good gracious, sir! does he want to kill him?—Mr. X. declares perfect quiet offers the only chance of recovery—and, poor young gentleman, he does fret so much!" shaking her head, "and the Admiral, you know, of all men in the world, just now, sir...."

"It must be prevented at any risk," cried Iñez, coming hastily forwards, "My father?—Good heavens! such a meeting—and at such a moment.—Oh, Captain Sullivan!—find some means to prevent it—let him not come—alas!—alas!—Harry is utterly incapable of such an exertion."

"You think so," said Sullivan, his anxiety rendering him insensible to the strange manner

of this address, "but what must be done? Shall I return to town, and endeavour to stop the carriage?"

"Any thing—every thing—but, good heavens! what is here?"

At that moment a carriage stopped at the little gate, two gentlemen alighted from it —and the treble sounds of Mr. Palmer's voice might be heard as he marshalled them across the garden.

"Certainly, my Lord Admiral, undoubtedly this is the place where the young gentleman has been lying ever since, in my best bed-room —and I have been too happy to do my best— and undoubtedly he is, I am proud to say, very considerably much better.—No doubt he will be proud to see you, my lord.—Shall I step up and see?"

"By heavens, it is he!" cried Sullivan, "The obstinate old fellow—I told him—but he'll never believe, he says, that Harry will be sorry to see him.—God bless me! he's upon the stairs."

The door of Captain Vivian's apartment opened, and Mr. Palmer's voice was heard.

"I beg pardon, Captain Vivian—I believe you are not asleep—a gentleman, by name—Rear-Admiral Thornhaugh, and a Mr. Roper are below, and request to see you."

There was silence for two seconds—then in low broken tones—"I shall be glad to see them."

"The tall, rugged Admiral entered the room—his countenance working with emotion, which he vainly endeavoured to suppress—He walked up to the bed with his usual abruptness.

"Harry!—my poor fellow!—My God!"

It was all he could articulate—tears coursed rapidly down his iron-furrowed cheeks, and his mighty frame heaved like that of an infant. Mr. Roper, whose broad square figure, and rough weather-beaten face, yet bore an air of gentleness and goodness, singularly attractive, wept as he followed his master, with a silent melting of the man within, which contrasted

strikingly with the more convulsive passion of the Admiral, little used to such a mood.

Captain Vivian stretched out his hand, and grasped that of the father of his Iñez—He could not speak—The Admiral clasped it fervently, and clearing his voice—

"Cheer up—cheer up, Harry!" he said at length, "This is a bad business, Vivian—The unworthy creature! Are you so badly wounded? You will have your eye-sight again, no doubt—and as for the rest——"

Vivian pressed the hand he held, and groaned.

"Why, as for the rest—you must be a man, and forget her."

"Oh, Admiral!" was all he could say.

"You must forget her, I say, Vivian—forget her, as I do—A false, worthless, ungrateful wanton! Don't trouble yourself about her more—discard her from your heart and thoughts as I do—My daughter!—no daughter of mine—My blood in her veins!—never believe it—I dis-

own her—I cast her off—never waste a thought upon her, Harry—We all loved her so! You must get well—and be off to your ship—a better bride, I warrant you—A false woman! Pooh! pooh! think no more of her."

Vivian sighed, but made no answer; while the Admiral, exhausted by his own vehemence, sat down and caught his breath—his eyes still fixed upon the pride and darling of his heart, whom, it may be truly said, he loved as his own son.

"To leave you—for that long-legged—book-learned—lubberly landsman! you, the pride and delight of her old father's eyes! A wretched Jezebel! You must forget her."

"Admiral," at length, said Vivian, with the appearance of great effort, "let us not speak upon this painful subject—I hope to bear my misfortunes as I ought to do."

"No doubt—no doubt—no fear of that, Harry—No fear of your spirit and honour—but your eyes—your eyes—tell me—tell me,

you won't be a poor blind, helpless driveller, or I shall curse her aloud."

"God forbid!—God forbid!—don't curse her—no, God forbid!—God forbid!"

"You—and your children—and her children—to leave you all—to shame us, and disgrace us—to dishonour her mother's grave—her father's grey hairs—and blast her husband's honest name and fame! Let me curse her, as she deserves—Daughter of mine!—Damn her ——."

The bed shook under the unfortunate Captain Vivian, struck as he was to the soul, by the severity of the justly irritated father, whose rude passion, bursting forth in these rough and violent expressions, seemed to tear in pieces the heart of the tender and affectionate husband—He gasped for breath—He strove to stifle his emotions, but the agony rived his shattered frame.

Mr. Roper perceived the excess of his emotion, and sympathised in its cause. He, too,

justly grieved, disappointed, and indignant as he felt, cherished a latent tenderness for the sinner, while he detested the sin.

"Oh, sir," he cried, "don't say so—God forgive her—and forgive us all!—We are all sinners—Have pity on your own flesh and blood, sir!—Don't curse your only child."

"Did she remember she was my child," said the stern father, "when she dishonoured him whom I had chosen for my son?—Did she remember her father was a seaman, when she shamed and disgraced him?—No—but as she forgot me—may I forget her!—and may God forget her, in the hour of his mercy!"

Inexpressibly shocked at this speech, Captain Vivian sunk back upon his pillow. Mr. Roper was silent, and the Admiral went on.

"Harry, my boy—my dear boy!—what do you mean to do?"

"I have not thought of what I shall do," said Captain Vivian, now sighing heavily, and quite overcome. "I hope sometimes," with a

faint smile, "I shall be spared that trouble."

"Pooh—pooh—never be down-hearted—Why, Harry, this is like a child—We shall live to forget all this."

"Never, sir," said Vivian, faintly.

"Admiral," said Mr. Roper, who perceived by the crimson flushes which passed rapidly over the face of Captain Vivian, how dreadfully he was agitated by this scene: "Admiral," he said, "this is too much for Captain Vivian—We had better leave him now, and come again presently."

"Leave him!" cried the Admiral, "Poor fellow—poor fellow!—and this is what he is brought to!—he, as brave as a lion—as hard as a rock—now laid out like a puny girl—ruined by a false, ungrateful woman—God bless you, Harry!—Yes, yes—I see you are too ill to speak—Its all over—all over—A vile wanton, why do you waste a thought on her?—Whistle her down the wind, as I do—

and may the great God punish her as she deserves!"

So saying, in an agony of grief and rage, the stern father rose from the bed-side, and, accompanied by Mr. Roper, left the room.

"Never think of her more!—discard her!—disown her!—Yes, Iñez, he who gave you birth, may forget—disown—and curse you;—yes, he may renounce and deny you—but I—my Iñez!—my Iñez!—my idol!—my love!—my only, only love!—Oh, Iñez, cruel, barbarous Iñez—what had I done, that you should abandon me!—my loved-one! my wife!—what had your poor Harry done?—alas! I loved too fondly—alas! I was not worthy to fill a heart like yours—my idol!—too fondly loved!—alas!—alas!"

In exclamations like these, which the delirious heat of rising fever seemed to render more vehement and piercing, the long-controlled feelings of Vivian, driven almost to madness by the bitterness of the last scene,

burst at length the restraints his sense of honour had imposed. Deep groans, amounting, at times, almost to cries, mingled with his wild expressions of grief, while he writhed in agony upon the bed, which trembled with the passion of his frame.

Iñez, in the meantime, now greatly enfeebled by the sufferings and fatigues of the last two days, seemed, like himself, almost annihilated by the scene she had overheard; she had rolled upon the floor, in anguish that mocked control, at the bitter severity of her father's denunciations;—but, when his solemn curse struck her ear, the violence of her distress was arrested, as by a charm. She sat up, on the ground, and, listening with a face, in which dismay seemed to have effaced every other expression—

"It is done!" she cried, "Mrs. Crane—he has cursed me."

"Alas, madam!" said Mrs. Crane, whose eyes, little used to weep, were running over;

" it was only in his passion—He seems a violent old gentleman, and takes things warmly—He'll be sorry for this, some time."

" Did my husband curse me too, Mrs. Crane?"

" No, dear young lady—he says nothing."

" He will never, never curse me," said Iñez, melting into tears, " He is an angel of goodness—He will never curse me."

As she spoke, the cries and groans of Captain Vivian were heard.

" They are gone," said Mrs. Crane. " Poor gentleman! he is crying, alone."

" Does he curse me?"

" No, he's calling for you."

" For me?" and she sprang from the floor, and hurried to his bed-side: " Harry!"

His voice ceased as she entered—but he was too much agitated to hear her words. When she approached the bed, she was thunder-struck at what she saw—His countenance was fallen, his whole frame quivering—his teeth rattled

and chattered—blue and livid colours spread over his face—At her cry, Mrs. Crane came in.

"Good mercy, madam!—Oh, what a change!"

It is needless to describe it—The shivering fit was succeeded by a violent paroxysm of fever—All the flattering symptoms which had rewarded the excessive care of the preceding days disappeared—The wound, exasperated by fever, assumed an appearance the most alarming—On the evening of the second day Captain Vivian was declared passed recovery.

Calmed by that languor which succeeds to the dreadful excitement of fever, his feelings which, thus irritated, had displayed themselves in the most fearful agonies, softened at the near and certain approach of death. A gentle and melancholy composure once more tranquillized his spirits—He asked to see his children.

They were speedily brought—and by his desire, came into his chamber unattended.

Iñez, trusting to the power of that disguise which had deceived so many—and, indeed, almost reckless of consequences, now that the termination of all seemed so fast approaching, remained in the room, partly concealed by the shade of a curtain—Her heart in its desolation yearned after her little ones—and she resolved to see them once more, at any risk.

They came into the room, like the babes in the wood, holding by each other's hands, but no longer cheerful and prattling—Already Iñez could detect in the air of both the effect of Miss Vivian's notions of education.

Florence, indeed, always soft and gentle, appeared only paler than she was wont: but the joyous, open-hearted little Georgy already wore that broken down, dull look, which children of an ardent, hasty, affectionate character assume, when treated with coldness and severity.

Tutored, repressed, for ever naughty, the poor little child had passed in disgrace and tears, the days which had elapsed since, for-

saken by her mother, she had been consigned to the care of a cold, unsympathising stranger.

Iñez, whose penetration, ever acute, was sharpened by a mother's sympathy—read all this with a bleeding heart, as the lovely children entered the room.

"Are you there, my treasures?" said the father's broken voice.

"Papa! Papa!"

"Gently, gently, Georgy," said little Florence, but the child was already pressed to its father's bosom.

"Ah! how glad I am to come to you!—We have been so unhappy," said the little girl.

"Have you, my darlings? Where is Florence?"

"Here, papa, close by—Can't you see her?"

"My little ones—I cannot see."

Florence wept—Georgy cried; "And you're so ill! Poor, poor papa!—Where's mamma to nurse you?"

"Oh, Georgy!" said Florence.

"They won't let me speak of her at Aunt Vivian's — and they say I'm very naughty, 'cause I can't help it—and I will speak of her— I love her best of all the world, and . . . ."

"Hush! hush! my dear;" said Iñez, softly from behind the curtain—She saw that this was more than Captain Vivian could bear.

"That's mamma—" said the child, springing joyfully up.—"That's mamma—She's behind the curtain—She's hiding herself for play—mamma! dearest! sweet mamma!" flinging herself across the bed, and throwing her arms round her neck; "I knew you would come again."

"My child," said Iñez, endeavouring vainly to unclasp the eager arms which embraced her. "I am not your mamma. I am the nurse."

"Oh! don't, don't play at that any longer," said Florence, bursting into tears, as she ran towards her, and hung upon her gown — "mamma! mamma! do kiss me."

"Indeed, you are mistaken," said Iñez —

still struggling to preserve her disguise, "I am the nurse."

"Papa, she will say she's the nurse," cried Georgy: "don't let her—You've got an ugly gown, but you are mamma." She covered her face with her kisses.

"Speak," said Captain Vivian, in a hollow tone. "Speak again . . . The child is not mistaken.—Have you been with me all these days?"

"Forgive me!" was all that Iñez could say—

A pause . . .

At length:—"My children, embrace her!—it is your mother!"

Iñez, thus permitted, gave way to all her fondness—She clasped the children alternately to her breast—She covered them with kisses, while her sobs and tears were audible. Captain Vivian understood the scene, he was unable to witness, and a tear rolled down his wasted cheek.

At length, having allowed time for their emotion to subside, he desired her to bring the little girls close to him; and, having kissed, and given them his blessing, and exhorted them, in broken accents, to be good children, he told Iñez to take them to their nurse, and "then return," he said, "to me!"

She re-entered the room, alone; but, timid and ashamed, she feared to approach the bed.

"Is it, indeed, you?" said Captain Vivian. "Come nearer to me—time is short—my moments are counted. Have you nothing to say?"

She now came up, and kneeled down by the side of the bed.—

"Harry, I had not intended to allow myself this consolation—I had not hoped that, in this world, you would speak to me more. I did not dare to hope it—I came to perform, as I best might, my poor duty of attending you—to save, if possible, a life my guilt had destroyed. It has not pleased God to bless

endeavours such as mine; but, Harry, you have not cursed me—When my father cursed me, you did not curse me—Forgive me, before you die."

"Too happy so to die," in a deep and broken voice. "The dark curtains of the grave are folding round me—the pride of inexorable honour asks no more—Death sanctifies the affection it cannot interrupt. My Iñez! may God forgive you, as I do!"

He stretched out his wasted hand—She took it reverently, and pressed upon it one long, holy kiss.

"May I stay with you?" at last she said, with great humility. "Don't send me away!"

"Alas! you need not fear it; a few brief hours, my Iñez! and I shall be nothing—this heart, that beat too fondly, will be still; but stay with me—we have much to speak of—Ah!" and a smile of ineffable sweetness played over his pallid lips. "Ah! death is sweet near thee!"

He now lay some time still, holding her

hand in his, seeming to forget all that had parted them. "I had much to say!" he kept repeating; but that was all: he seemed to rest in a tranquillity which he was unwilling to disturb, his cheek leaning against her arm, his hand locked in hers. But too soon his breath began to thicken; shades of darkness gathered round his features. He agitated his arms.—

"Here—here!" he said.

She rose, and stretched out hers — he caught her to his bosom—he was no more!

Surprised at the deep silence of the apartment, Mrs. Crane at last ventured to enter. Every thing was still, except the sound of low, suppressed sobbings, which proceeded from the bed. She ran for a light, and, at a glance, discovered what had happened. Captain Vivian lay lifeless, and Iñez sat in a chair by the bedside, her eyes fixed on the body, with a sort

of vacant, unmeaning stare, while a dull, low sob broke, at intervals, from her breast.

Mrs. Crane spoke to her, but she did not appear to listen; she sat in a stupid manner, sobbing at intervals, as a child does after a long and exhausting fit of crying. From this state it was found impossible to rouse her. When they tried to move her, she stretched her arms, with a faint cry, and repulsed the attempt—then suffered them to fall again on her lap with the same expression of unmeaning listlessness.

Many hours were passed in the same manner. Captain Sullivan, Mr. X., and Mr. Trevor called. Mrs. Crane did not attempt to conceal the secret of Inez any longer, and each of them, affected by her situation, was unwearied in endeavours to relieve her. A physician was sent for, and declared that the only chance of rescuing her from what might prove a permanent state of imbecility of mind, consisted in bringing into her presence what might suddenly

awaken her recollections, and call up her tears. He mentioned her children, and Captain Sullivan instantly set off for Roehampton, to beg of Miss Vivian to bring them to her.

He was received coldly enough by Miss Vivian, who could not understand, and secretly felt a little jealous of the interest excited by Iñez. She declared that it was quite impossible to suffer the children to visit their mother, whom they ought never to see again, &c. &c.: entrenched herself in all the pride of virtue, and all the coldness of her unamiable character, and persisted in a flat refusal.

Sullivan returned to West End, to find Iñez in the same state of helpless inanity, sitting by her husband's body, and sobbing, while good Mrs. Crane was crying over her like a child.

It was now midnight, when, affected beyond measure at this scene of helpless distress, Trevor had gone down to Mr. Palmer's little garden. — The moon had risen — the stars

were glistening in the firmament—the calm magnificence of nature contrasting forcibly with the scene of human ruin and misery within the house.

Trevor, lost in melancholy reflection, leaned against the gate which led from the garden into the fields, when a figure, tall, thin, and wasted, with garments worn and tattered, and dark and troubled countenance, approached him—it was Laurence.

"He is dead!"—said a voice, feeble and hollow—"He is dead!"—

"It is all over, indeed," said Trevor. "But why are you here?—we keep it a secret a few hours, as it is impossible to move Mrs. Vivian from the room."

"She lives, then?"

"If that may be called life, which is existence without perception, and without aim!—But, indeed, Hervey, this will never do!—It is time you should abandon your present strange indifference to your own safety. Be persuaded

to take shelter from the pursuits of the law, which must soon overtake you!—and rest—" laying his hand on the wasted arm of his friend, and looking kindly in his face. "I never saw a man so changed."

Well might he remark it. Hervey had more the appearance of a tenant of the grave than of a human being!—His cheek was pale and hollow—His eyes, enlarged and glassy, had little power of speculation or expression remaining—His voice was so low and husky, that he could with difficulty make himself heard.

"The law!—the law will not wreak its vengeance upon me!—A few more hours . . . . But, Trevor, as you hope for compassion from your Maker, in your darkest moment, have mercy upon me in mine. Open the gate—I must, and I will . . . ."

As he spoke, he feebly pushed at the barrier, and entered the garden.

"What are you about?" said Trevor.

"I will see her—I will see *them!*" He gasped for breath as he spoke; his respiration was evidently becoming very difficult. "I will see her—It is necessary I should once gaze upon the ruin I have made, before I close my weary eyes. Do not, Trevor—do not attempt to prevent me. I am a dying man! Barbarians," with some return of his old bitterness, "even barbarians listen to the prayers of the dying!"

Trevor, shocked, and distressed, offered no further opposition; and Laurence, guided by a sort of instinct, crossed the garden, entered the house, and mounted the stairs. The door of the apartment stood open; he attempted not to cross the threshold: but, leaning against the door-post, contemplated, with a countenance of moody despair, the scene within.

The body of his friend lay stretched upon the bed, composed, and covered with a sheet. The face, however, from which the handkerchief had fallen, was visible, by the faint light of two or three candles, disposed irregularly

about the room. Close by the side of the bed, the unhappy Mrs. Vivian, his miserable victim, was still seated, pale as marble, her hair falling disordered over her face, no longer waving in luxuriant beauty, but tarnished, damp, and heavy: her features, of which even her present helpless situation could not destroy the celestial beauty, fixed, and immovable—her eyes, wide open, but without expression.—She resembled one frozen and arrested — a stony statue, rather than a living being—a statue of despair and dismay.

Mrs. Crane kneeled by her side, chafing her listless and insensible hands—in vain.

Laurence remained some time in contemplation of this picture—his heart, which had nearly ceased to beat, now palpitating with a violence which threatened almost instant destruction of its feeble and wasted powers.—He did not attempt to enter the room: and, after having, as it would seem, satiated his soul with bitterness, he slowly turned away, and went silently down

stairs.—He passed again through the garden, unperceived by Trevor, and went out at the little gate.

It would appear that he wanted strength to go far: indeed, that he had not attempted it—but having reached the field, had laid himself down with his face to the earth, and had there expired.

The next morning he was found, extended on the grass—his face against the ground, his two hands clasped over his forehead.

But Iñez lived.

Vanquished by the earnest and honest prayers of Mr. Roper, the frozen Miss Vivian at length gave way;—the tears of the children were allowed to water the bosom of the mother—their embraces called back the warm currents to her heart—their innocent voices summoned her back from that world of shadows to which she was fast hastening.

She lived—Not to re-appear, restored after due lustration, and rear an unblushing front

the heroine of a romantic story:—not after a season of decorous retirement, to resume that place in society which she had so justly forfeited.

She lived—but it was in humiliation and obscurity—offering the daily sacrifice of her repentance and her shame, before the throne of that God whose laws she had broken; at the shrine of that loved being her frailty had destroyed.

MANY years after this, a gentleman, just arrived at Naples, walking in that lovely garden, which, stretching along the shore of the fair bay, forms, with its bowers and groves, the most charming promenade in Europe, was attracted by a very interesting group of English people which passed by him. It consisted of two beautiful girls, about fifteen and sixteen, in the bloom of youth and health—Grace and elegance were in their motions, and their countenances were singularly expressive of modesty, sweetness, and intelligence. A little behind them walked a lady in deep mourning, who appeared to be their governess—She had evidently once been remarkably beautiful, and still preserved more than beauty in the serious, yet tender, character of her face—Her carriage was grave, almost to nunlike stedfast-

ness—her looks calm and thoughtful,—more than thoughtful—the deep traces of ineffaceable sorrow and suffering were marked upon her beautiful brow.—At her side walked a square, thick-set man, with a rough and ruddy countenance, well bronzed by exposure to wind and weather—His whole appearance would have been common-place and vulgar in the extreme, had not such an air of inexpressible goodness and kindness been diffused over it, as would have served to rescue any appearance in the world from such an imputation.

"Who are those sweet girls?" said the gentleman to a friend—"I never saw two such lovely creatures."

"Don't you know?—Oh, I forgot—you are but just arrived—Every body knows them—and yet nobody knows them—They are, to be sure, poor girls, in a singularly awkward situation—Do you see that old Trojan there? he seems to be the only person belonging to them—neither father, mother, grandfather, nor

grandmother, aunt, uncle, nor cousin, have they. And so, you see, they don't get introduced — and they go no where — but not one jot seems the young one to mind—She's as gay as if every day in the year were carnival."

"But you have not told me—who they are?"

"Oh! the Miss Vivians."

"Vivian!—Vivian!"

"Captain Vivian's daughters—You recollect an odd—ugly story—years ago—an elopement —a duel—and two murders—Well then—these are the daughters."

"Charming creatures!"

"You may say so—but charming as they are, no one much likes to meddle with them. It's an ugly story to append to one's pedigree—However, some Irish fortune-hunter will, it's to be hoped, have mercy on them, some of these days: for they're well enough off."

"And who's that remarkably beautiful woman who walks behind them?"

"Oh! their governess——yes, we do think

her most transcendantly beautiful—but cold—cold as the icicle on Dian's temple.—There's no blot on her escutcheon—Every one is at liberty to make up to her—and really, she's so divinely handsome—many of us would do a foolish thing for her—But would you believe it? she's as savage as a she-bear—No speaking to her—Always the same grave, cold, distant, distrait, manner—puts a man quite out."

"What's her name?"

"Oh! Madame St. Aulaire—quite a name a là Genlis—of which school I conclude she is —A sort of *melange interessante* of *grande dame* and *institutrice*—like that most illustrious petticoat preceptor of Princes."

As they talked, the group passed again—the young ones chatting and laughing: more especially one pretty dimpled sparkler,—the youngest. She was less beautiful than her sister, but, perhaps, still more engaging, from her petulance and vivacity.

"Who will introduce me?" said the gen-

tleman; "I must and will know them." As he spoke, he fixed his eyes on Madame St. Aulaire. "I see it all," said he.

"Who will introduce you?—I'll be hanged if I know—they're so deuced proud and shy—As if that was their cue; when they can hardly get noticed at all."

"I think I have seen the old gentleman before,—Roper?"

"Aye, that's his most nautical name—as if he required *that* to mark him for a purser, or some such thing—Only look at him—Did you ever see such a guardian for young ladies?"

"Well, well, he looks good-humoured enough," said the other, now evidently in a hurry to be gone. "Good morning."

"Good morning!—Why, Trevor, I should not wonder, if, in your romance and knight-errantry, you should actually fall in love with one of these forlorn ones;—but mind me—that won't do—I tell you nobody knows them."

The sagacious gentleman was right—Trevor actually did fall in love with one of these neglected girls—nay, more, he actually married the sparkling Georgina Vivian, though five-and-twenty years older than she was;—and Georgina Vivian was the happiest of wives—and the young Marquis of L., who, though a peer, and a man of the world, was neither a coxcomb nor a roué, married the lovely Florence —And Madame St. Aulaire, having resigned her pupils into such guardianship—as though a task for which she had been mechanically wound up was completed—sank very suddenly into one of those anomalous declines, for which medicine assigns no cause, and offers no cure —and, breathing a "*nunc dimittis*," in the faith and grateful spirit of the ancient Simeon, she sank to rest; and was buried, by her own earnest desire, in the grave where Captain Vivian had been deposited just eleven years before!

Mr. Roper may still be seen, either at Mr. Trevor's or at Lord L.'s, occupying the place carefully reserved for him by the fire-side, or playing with the little prattlers fast springing up around him.

THE END.

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